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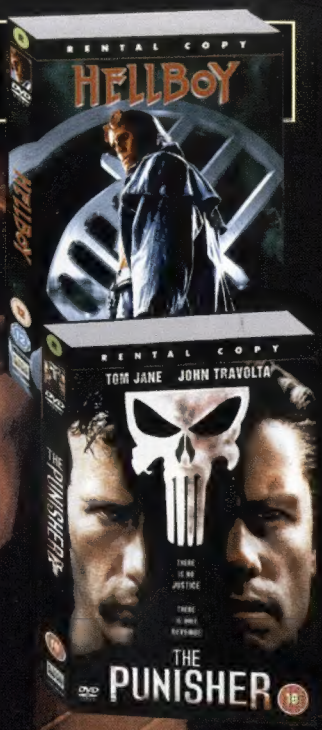

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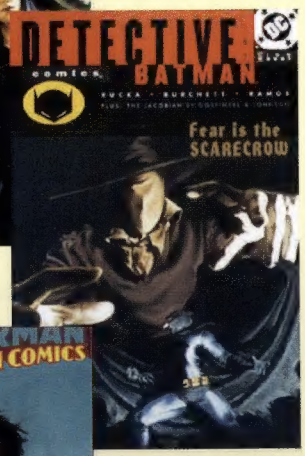

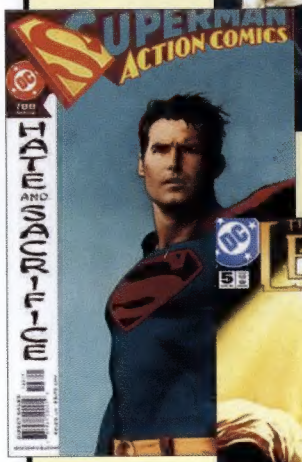

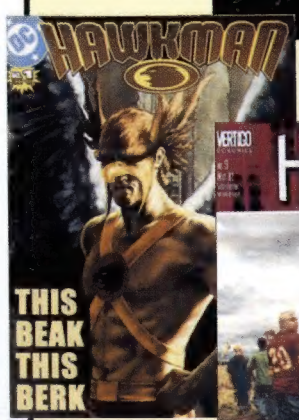

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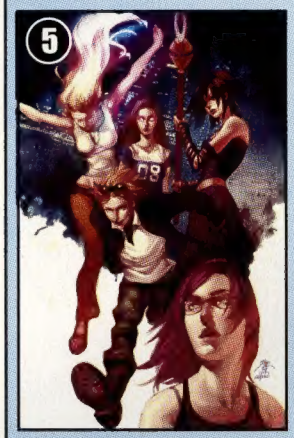
#179 CHRISTMAS 2004

Inside this issue

COVER: For a Londoner who had no interest in comics, but was dragged in by his pal to add dialogue to a 1977 Brendan McCarthy comic, Peter Milligan has certainly done well by the industry. Now the idiosyncratic author of X-Statix, the title for people not interested in X-Men, is taking over Marvel's main event, as writer of **Uncanny X-Men**. Full story on 20.

News



NEWS INTERNATIONAL: Marvel readies its next generation of youthful heroes... **Understanding Comics** author to write **Superman** mini... Relaunch and major revamp for Black Panther... Desperado goes **Beyond Avalon** for Image... Vertigo takes Dredd-like look into future... Weird animal hunt begins at NBM... **District X** writer offers Daredevil **Redemption**... **Legion of Super-Heroes** gets another chance... 1930s Hollywood hero returns... Superheroes bring World War II to Image... Vertigo offer crop of *Constantine* movie tie-ins... Image invaded by **Lions, Tigers and Bears**... Concrete resurfaces... plus much more 5
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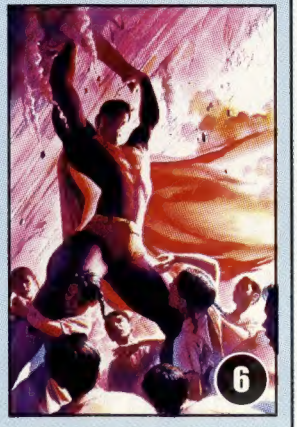

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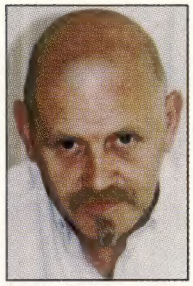
Sez Dez



Editorial
Dez Skinn

THAT went well. It was a bit of a beta test really and, for me, a trial by fire. I'd not been involved in one since 1981, so I was a tad rusty when I agreed to leap in as co-organiser of the traditional annual comics event. But it really did go well. Even the bolt-on Friday event, the ProCon, was a success thanks to veteran artists Mike Noble, John M Burns and Mike Ploog being such great on-stage entertainers.

It's funny how you can find yourself involved in something by accident. Fate? Destiny? Dumb luck? I've always maintained that I've made a career out of doing the obvious. Such obvious moves as launching titles which had ready-made markets (**Starburst** when *Star Wars* opened), **Doctor Who** and **House of Hammer** simply because nobody else was doing them and the screen versions had literally millions of followers, **Warrior** as a creator-owned outlet for disaffected talent with nowhere else to go, **Comics International** as a one-shop stop for keeping up with all aspects of the industry... the list goes on. Even launching national chatlines as a respectable and clean industry when BT's local *Talkabout* had fallen foul of ne'er-do-wells, all obvious stuff. They haven't all worked as well as I'd have hoped, but that's to be expected. Despite gathering a new crew of experts in their field, last year's **Toy Max** was a noble failure, courtesy of wholesalers' miopic greed, so we're now avoiding them and moving into book publishing.

But co-organising events? Well, it wasn't preplanned. What happened was that we had a call from Bristol's Area 51 comics shop. They were planning a local two-day mart and I happened to suggest bolting on a Friday event for professionals – folk not only able to get the day off work, but who could charge it to expenses. Also, I felt a strong creator presence would give the event more gravitas than a mere mart.

But Area 51 wasn't geared up to stage the ProCon, so we offered to! Shortly thereafter, their co-organiser of the annual festivals, Kev F Sutherland, dropped out and we inherited his role for next Spring.

But Bristol's an awfully long way to travel for we Brighton boys 'n' girls, so a more local venue was mooted. The end product is that Quality is now helping Area 51 with its Bristol spring Expo and Area 51 will be helping Quality with its own winter Expo.

So, two events a year, each with their own identity; Bristol carrying on the established tradition while our own Expo looks like going where no show has gone before... We've already got a steering committee of 28 experts in their fields, outside funding in place, and big, big ideas.

But that's a year away. In the meantime, Expo (Bristol) 2005 is looking pretty big itself, with possibly more high profile overseas guests than ever before in the UK.

As they say, we'll be there. Will you?

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Marvel starts young with its Next generation of heroes

Pictured is cover art for two comics whose titles fall under the Marvel Next umbrella: for ***Young Avengers*** *#1 (by Jim Cheung – above) and for the first issue of Marvel's* ***X-23*** *six parter (Billy Tan – below).*

Solo and in teams, teenagers are focus of promotion introducing new characters and relaunching old ones

RICK Jones and the long-dead Bucky aside, kid sidekicks have never played a role in the Marvel Universe. A result of Stan Lee's antipathy towards the concept, the absence of such adolescent allies has led to an unfilled void as Marvel's original teenage superheroes such as the Human Torch and Spider-Man have been allowed to mature with Marvel's readers.

Although attempts have been made previously to establish a second generation of youthful heroes with concepts as diverse as Speedball, New Warriors and A-Next, most have eventually fallen into obscurity.

Marvel Next

Undeterred, Marvel is now making a concerted effort to introduce a fresh crop of juvenile crimefighters through five $2.99 titles, which are being promoted jointly. John Dokes, Marvel's marketing director, was at pains to tell **CI** that *Marvel Next* is not a line. "It's simply a focus on the young new Marvel characters we think will have a chance to become the heroes of a new generation."

Of the comics falling under the *Marvel Next* umbrella, two – **Arana: The Heart of The Spider** and **X-23** *[see below]* – feature solo heroes while the other three – **Livewires**, **Runaways** and **Young Avengers** – are team titles. In addition, Marvel is testing the water with two, making **Livewires** and **X-23** six-part minis while the others are being launched as ongoing series.

Although **Livewires** and **Young Avengers** introduce new heroes, **Arana** continues the adventures of the arachnid heroine who debuted earlier this year in the first issue of the revived **Amazing Fantasy**. Another relaunch, **Runaways** brings back the recently-cancelled title that has already appeared under the *Marvel Age* and *Tsunami* banners.

Best shot

"That's a very tough question to answer," said Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada when **CI** asked him what differentiates a *Marvel Next* hero from any of the many new characters introduced in the past couple of decades. "Why many character launches in the past have met with great success while others just don't catch on, you never really truly know – okay, sometimes you know – you just give it your best shot. All we can say is that we really feel we have a wonderful crop of ideas that we feel are really worth putting a lot of our efforts behind."

Shipping on January 12, **X-23** #1 kicks off the *Marvel Next* promotion with **Arana: The Heart of the Spider** debuting on the 19th. **Young Avengers** premieres on February 9 with the first issues of **Livewires** and **Runaways** following a week later.

Wolverine clone gets her own series

WHILE the relaunch of Brian K Vaughan and Adrian Alphona's **Runaways** features the longest-established characters in the *Marvel Next* roster *[see main story]*, the teen team only beats the second oldest by a matter of months.

Introduced by the writer/penciller team in the July 2003 cover-dated first issue of their own *Tsunami* title, the Runaways just pip X-23, who debuted on August 2.

Like DC's Jimmy Olsen and the Fantastic Four's Herbie, her first appearance was outside of comics – in the 40th episode of the animated *X-Men: Evolution* TV series. That episode – which borrowed from Eluki Bes Shahar's 1997 novel, **X-Men: Smoke and Mirrors** – was scripted by Craig Kyle and co-written by him and Chris Yost. It marked the young female clone of Wolverine's only appearance until November's **NYX** #3 when writer Joe Quesada brought her into the Marvel Universe.

Street prostitute

Set sometime after her TV debut, the issue depicted X-23 as living on the streets and working as an underage prostitute. The comic credits Kyle – who, as Marvel Studios' director of development, television programming, oversees all of Marvel's live-action and animated TV projects – as being X-23's creator.

A comics newcomer, Kyle is now writing her solo adventures in a six-issue *Marvel Next* series subtitled *Innocence Lost*. This explores her origin and examines her true relationship with Wolverine. **X-23** is pencilled by **Tomb Raider**'s Billy Tan.

***X-23** #1, priced $2.99, ships January 12.*

Beyond Avalon

HAVING launched Desperado with the resurrection of Bob Burden's **Flaming Carrot**, Joe Pruett is ready to debut the first original concept from his Image imprint, which he himself is writing.

A quarterly ongoing title, Pruett's **Beyond Avalon** is drawn by Goran Sudzuka *[see promo illustration above]*. The Croatian artist told **CI** he was attracted to the project by the idea of "a beautiful young girl going through all kinds of adventures in a fantasy world where everything's possible... that is something that I find really attractive to draw.

"The whole series is imagined as a playground where we can play with whatever motifs, from any legends written so far, we like," added Sudzuka, who includes **Outlaw Nation** and **Hellblazer Special: Lady Constantine** among his credits. "It's a vast space that promise lots of fun and excitement both for readers and authors."

Mystical places

"In the first four issues young Megan leaves the island of Avalon, where she was born, in search of her father who left because of his restless adventurous spirit," he continued, referring to the series' star. "Avalon is surrounded by thick mists through which you can go to all the other mystical places. The trouble is, you can easily get lost in the fog and you can never be sure what lays beyond.

"So," Sudzuka continued, "our heroine is gonna have lots of adventures, make lots of friends and enemies following her father's footsteps, before she finds him."

Mythical paradise

For his part, Pruett, the one-time Caliber editor who has written several Marvel titles among them **Cable**, **Domino** and **Magneto Rex**, explained, "This isn't just a story about knights, chivalry, round tables and the such. Far from it. This is a story about a girl searching for her place in life, for her destiny."

"Imagine being the daughter of someone as admired as King Arthur," continued Pruett. "That's a lot to live up to. She's Arthur's daughter, but she's also her own person. Megan has to go out into the world and find who she is and what her purpose is. Basically, it's a coming of age story, only told with a medieval flair.

Describing **Beyond Avalon** as entertaining fun, Pruett asked in conclusion, "Don't we need a little bit more of that in today's world?"

***Beyond Avalon** #1, priced $2.95, ships on January 5.*

Marvel gives first black superhero major overhaul

WOLVERINE's John Romita Jr is teaming up with a pioneer of the modern black hip-hop film movement to establish the very first black superhero as a major player in the Marvel Universe.

The return of the Black Panther in his own ongoing series is set to coincide with next year's Black History Month, an annual event that is growing in importance in the USA. Scheduled for a February premiere, the comic is written by Reginald Hudlin; the filmmaker responsible for 1990's *House Party*, he also co-wrote the recent Kyle Baker-illustrated **Birth of a Nation** *[Crown Publishers]*.

The writer and the artist often referred to as JRJR plan to spend the first six issues of the relaunched **Black Panther** recreating the origin and background of the Wakandan hero introduced by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1966's **Fantastic Four** #52. With their second six-parter, they intend to fully integrate him into the Marvel Universe.

"Reggie Hudlin's idea to bring back the Black Panther with a storyline that repositioned the character's role from that of a niche character to much larger role in the Marvel universe was so fresh and exciting, we were all captivated with the idea," said Joe Quesada, editor-in-chief, Marvel Publishing. "In fact, we see the Black Panther taking on the same kind of prominence in the Marvel universe as Spider-Man."

"When Marvel first created the Black Panther, there was excitement and real magic in the character for me," stated Hudlin. " The Black Panther is a king of a powerful yet untapped country, a son avenging his father's death, and a man educated in the finest schools. I'm thrilled to be given the opportunity to bring back the character in a way that not only respects the original idea of Stan Lee but also explores a side of his history that fans have never seen before."

***Black Panther** #1, priced $2.99, ships on February 2.*

*Above: John Romita Jr and Klaus Janson's art for the cover to the first issue of Marvel's relaunched **Black Panther** series.*

Understanding Comics author tackles Man of Steel

*Above: From Alex Ross's cover art for the first issue of DC's six-part **Superman: Strength**.*

NEVER one to be associated with mainstream comics, Scott McCloud has finally succumbed. After more than two decades in the industry, the **Zot!** creator has agreed to work on a superhero title.

Better-known for his vocal advocacy of online – or web – comics as much as for his ground-breaking **Understanding Comics** and its controversial sequel, **Reinventing Comics**, McCloud is writing a **Superman** mini for DC. Subtitled **Strength** and comprising of three 48-page prestige format issues, the series is drawn by Aluir (**Superman Adventures**) Amancio and renowned one-time **Uncanny X-Men** inker Terry Austin.

McCloud, who created the annual 24-Hour Comic event, is currently writing **Making Comics**, a follow up to his earlier two lauded explorations of the Ninth Art. Discussing his DC project, he said, "It's a story about what I think is the source of Superman's strength. It's not just about Krypton or red sun radiation. It's more about that moral compass he has and that sense of right and wrong and the kind of calmness that comes from true strength.

"Superman is interesting because he really is powerful enough that he doesn't have anything to prove to anybody. I think a lot of strength or so-called strength in superhero comics, often expresses itself through anger. Anger, as I've always understood it, stems from weakness," he added.

***Superman: Strength** #1, priced $5.95, ships on January 5.*

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In Brief

FREEDOM Force is coming to Image.

Based on Irrational Games' popular superhero MMORPG – massive(ly) multiplayer online role-playing game – and having no connection with Marvel's government-sanctioned super-team, the $2.95 series is drawn by Tom Scioli, creator of the self-published and Kirbyesque **Myth of 8-Opus**. A six-parter written by newcomer Eric Dieter, **Freedom Force** premieres on January 19.

KEITH Giffen and J M DeMatteis's sequel to **Formerly Known as the Justice League** is no longer going to be a standalone DC miniseries.

Instead the six-parter is to appear across issues #4-9 of the $2.95 **JLA: Classified**. The serial, which reunites the writers with artists Kevin Maguire and Joe Rubinstein, begins on February 16.

HEROIC Publishing is to revive its flagship superhero team.

Flare, the Black Enchantress, Psyche, Doctor Arcane, the Huntsman and Icestar are to reunite in **Tales of the Champions**. The California-based company's third title since its recent return to print, the quarterly premieres in June.

FORMER **Nightwing** writer Chuck Dixon is creating three adventure series for the company responsible for Italian editions of the now-defunct CrossGen's comics.

Dreamcolour is to stagger the launch of its as-yet untitled projects across three months beginning in April. Every 72-page Italian comic is to provide the basis for three issues of an American format version of that title. The first of these English-language editions – which are being produced by London-based Fanfare – is to be released in the US in October.

WRITTEN by **The Wretch**'s Phil Hester and drawn by John (**Hitman**) McCrea, **The Atheist** stars a man who hunts the unspeakable things that hide in dark corners.

Priced $3.50, the black and white bimonthly series debuts from Image on February 9.

HAVING already established himself as an adapter of computer games and movies, Kris Oprisko is turning his hand to bringing to comics a young adults novel by Clive Barker.

Drawn by **CVO: Covert Vampiric Operations – Artifact** artist Gabriel Hernandez, the **Metal Gear Solid** and **Underworld** writer's version of **The Thief of Always** is a bimonthly three-parter. It launches from IDW in January.

*THE WRITER of Mongoose Publishing's first comics venture – the imminent **Starship Troopers** graphic novel trilogy – is developing two six-issue projects for AP Comics. First up for the St Albans-based publisher from Tony Lee is **Mythlands**. Drawn by APC's **BIN4RY** artist Jim Suthern and set in a world "where the middle ages was every fantasy book you ever read," it is scheduled to premiere at next May's Comics Expo in Bristol. **The Gloom**, which is described as an affectionate nod to classic pulp stories, is set to follow a few months later. "Boasting guns, action, Nazis and Zeppelins," the series is illustrated by Daniel (**Comicana**) Boultwood* [see art above].

Vertigo triggers thoughts of Dredd

A GOVERNMENT-sanctioned corporate entity that allows US citizens to live safely and securely in a clean, terror-free and productive environment provides the backdrop to a futuristic Vertigo series.

But Ethicorp achieves its results by keeping society dosed on nonstop vid feeds, feel-good drugs, clean sex and low crime. Most people happily embrace its corporate motto: We Get the Bad Out!

Those who fail to measure up to the company's high standards are hunted down by its legions of high-tech killers it secretly controls. Somewhat reminiscent of **2000 AD**'s Judge Dredd in their mission and methods, each of these assassins is a one-man – or woman – judge, jury and executioner.

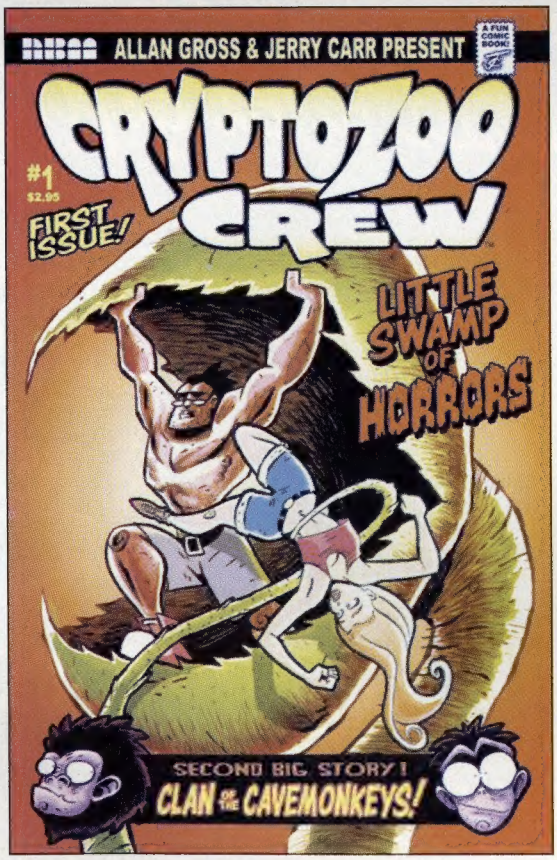
*Above: Art for the cover to **Trigger** #3 by John Watkiss.*

Known on the street as 'Triggers,' they act whenever Ethicorp observes something 'bad' but sometimes its definition of what is unacceptable is open to question.

The killers are the focus of **Trigger**, which is written by Jason Hall – who scripted Vertigo's recent **Beware the Creeper** mini – and drawn by John Watkiss. Describing the series, the British **Sandman Mystery Theatre** artist said, "The story is basically George Orwells's **1984** combined with a sense of Fritz Lang's **Metropolis** with edgy Roman Polanski overtones. I'm really excited because the story inspired a potential for illustrative stylishness due to the fusion of clothing from 1910 to the 1940s."

***Trigger** #1, priced $2.95, ships on December 15.*

Cryptid hunters hit NBM

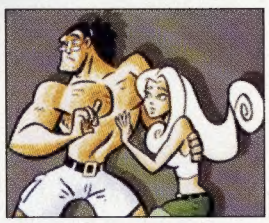


BETTER-known for English-language editions of European graphic albums than it is for originating home-grown comics, NBM is set to launch an ongoing title based on an online comic strip.

Written by Allan Gross and drawn by Jerry Carr, **Cryptozoo Crew** began life on the Insight Studios' website at *www.sunnyfundays.com*

The initial idea was conceived by Carr, who told **CI**, "I was addicted to *Crocodile Hunter* on TV at the time, and started toying with the idea of a devoted naturalist who travelled the world helping undiscovered creatures."

The black and white bimonthly series stars the husband-and-wife team of Tork and Tara Darwyn, Gross told **CI**. "Tork is a cryptozoologist, which means he travels the world searching for unknown or hidden animals – generically known as 'cryptids'. The best-known examples are the Loch Ness Monster and the Yeti, though we'll be dealing with lots of other exotic cryptids like Mokele-mbembe and Mothman. There will also be an occasional made up cryptid, usually based on a legend or folklore.



*Pictured are Tork and Tara Darwyn, the stars of NBM's **Cryptozoo Crew** [above] and the cover to the first issue of that NBM series [left]; art by Jerry Carr.*

"Tork's adventurous wife Tara is a high school teacher and martial arts expert who often accompanies him," said Gross, who describes the series as *Kolchak the Night Stalker* and/or *Crocodile Hunter* meets **Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus**. "The basic premise of the stories is that Tork can usually figure out the animals he finds but he can never figure out his wife. And this plot element is often highlighted by a connection between the cryptid's animal nature and Tork and Tara's human nature."

***Cryptozoo Crew** #1, priced $2.95, ships in January.*

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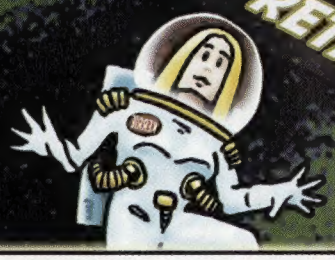

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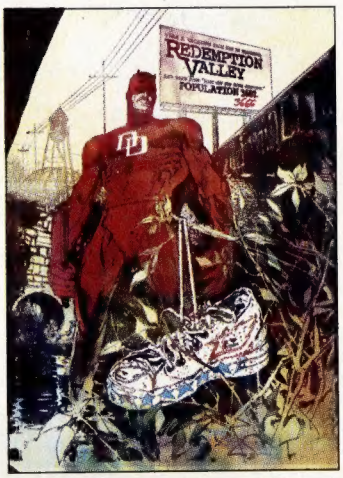
Redemption for Hine

DISTRICT X writer David Hine is basing his second Marvel project on a real-life 1993 triple homicide, one whose flawed investigation and trial is still the subject of concern in the US.

Pencilled by Michael (**Alias**) Gaydos, Hine's six-issue **Daredevil: Redemption** is based on the Robin Hood Hills Murders, which occurred in West Memphis, Arkansas. This case, in which three 8-year-old boys were brutally slain, led to three youths – alleged members of a Satanic cult – being found guilty of the murders although many consider their convictions unsafe.

The British writer's story takes Marvel's blind superhero to the small, God-fearing town of Redemption Valley. There – as attorney Matt Murdock – he defends a young 'devil-worshipping' metalhead accused of murdering another youth in a ritual killing. But is the boy just a scapegoat?



Above: Bill Sienkiewicz's cover art for the first issue of ***Daredevil: Redemption****. A $2.999 Marvel six-parter, it premieres on February 2.*

ONE OF the hottest bad girl artists of the mid-1990s has found a new home for his once phenomenally popular "cursed southern teen". The unfortunately-named Randy Queen is adopting a new style for his Dark Horse resurrection of Ariel Chylde, who can become creatures from her nightmares. His five-part ***Manga Darkchylde*** *is an all-ages title reintroducing the young woman who debuted at Maximum Press in 1996 and appeared at Image, Homage and WildStorm before disappearing in 1998. She re-emerged three years later when the writer/artist set up Darkchylde Entertainment, which published nothing after 2001's three-issue* ***Darkchylde: Redemption****. Shown above is Queen's art for the cover to the first issue of his $2.99 series, which premieres on February 2.*

Another chance for futuristic teen team

ALTHOUGH its team of 31st century youngsters is no longer as popular as it once was, DC has not given up on the Legion of Super-Heroes.

Despite the failure of its several attempts across the past two decades to attract new readers via relaunches and revamps, the New York-based publisher is making yet another bid to improve sales of the team's title. This time it has brought in the **Empire** team of Mark Waid *[pictured above]* and British artist Barry (**The Titans**) Kitson to re-invigorate the title, which is again restarting from #1.

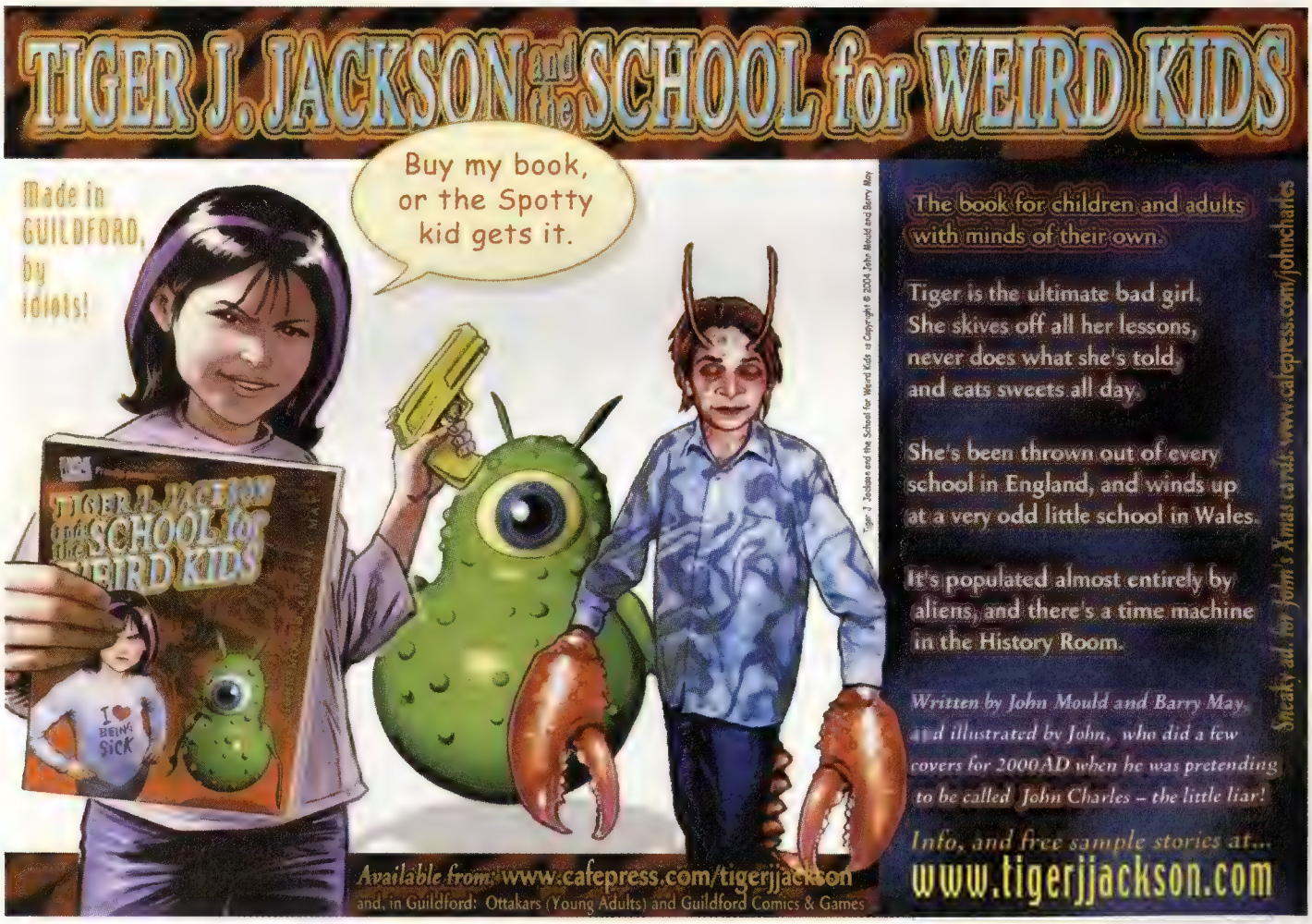
Pictured is Barry Kitson's cover art for issues #3 [above] *and #2* [right] *of DC's relaunched* ***Legion of Super-Heroes****.*

Speaking with **CI**, Waid, who is also writing **Fantastic Four** for Marvel, said they are keeping the core concept the same. "A thousand years from now, a team of teenagers – all from vastly different worlds and all with different superpowers – band together to form an intergalactic 'Knights of the Round Table'. As the Legion of Super-Heroes, they earn a reputation as fearless explorers and adventurers, fighting for justice and tolerance while learning from – and learning to tolerate – each other.

"The core difference," the writer, who claims to be the Legion of Super-Heroes' biggest fan, explained, "is that our Legion are agents of chaos in a utopian society – rebels who fight against the status quo rather than with it. It's sentient nature to settle into complacency. The early 31st century is a very conservative time, where inertia is the stagnating antithesis of the pioneering spirit and navel-gazing has replaced outreach.

"The Legion is a bunch of teenagers in a monochromatic, monodull society who are, if you will, the 'Society for Creative Anachronism' of the 31st century – kids who celebrate the bright costumes, capes, goofy names and sense of personal heroism that were embodied by the 'ancient super-heroes' of the 21st century," he concluded.

***Legion of Super-Heroes** #1, priced $2.95, ships December 29.*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Captain Gravity is back

*Above: From the cover to the first issue of Penny-Farthing's **Captain Gravity and the Power of the Vril** six-parter; art by Sal Velluto and Bob Almond.*

SWAMP Thing writer Joshua Dysart is bringing back a superhero who operates out of Hollywood in the late 1930s.

Captain Gravity made his debut in 1998 in his own Penny-Farthing four-parter. He is returning in a six-issue series – subtitled **The Power of the Vril** – courtesy of Dysart and the former **Black Panther** art team of Sal Velluto and Bob Almond.

When asked by **CI**, the writer said it is is his struggle for a sense of purpose that makes Captain Gravity different from other comics superheroes"Like all of us, but unlike the gamut of over-confident 'do-gooders' of comics he's never really fully formed, experiences change him constantly, for better and, sometimes, for worse."

Explaining his approach to the pre-World War II story, Dysart said, "I've pushed and expanded the 'pulp' a great deal. I've made the overall voice a little more modern and broadened the canvas. It's an epic, globe-spanning story that embraces all the conventional staples of the old Saturday morning pulp serials; pseudo-archeology, Nazis, spaceships, mutants, magic, spies, airplane dog fights, secret lairs, a damsel in distress, etcetera. I've also taken its characters to darker places, hopefully, without losing the sense of fun.

"I'm going for neo-pulp," he stated. "I want to give the characters realistic attitudes and motivations while keeping the elements of late '30s/early '40s pop storytelling. Also, I realised most superhero stories are about the hero's path as warrior but the warrior's story has always been one of my least favorite templates, so I decided to explore the hero's path as mystic."

***Captain Gravity and the Power of the Vril** #1, priced $2.95, ships in December.*

Comics auction benefits hospice

TRINITY Hospice at Clapham Common, London is better off to the tune of £800 thanks to Adrian Brown, who raised the money by auctioning the artwork and other items from his black and white **Just One Page** #2.

The 72-page magazine-sized comic – which included contributions from Charlie Adlard, Peter Gross, Trevor Hairsine and Hunt Emerson – was launched at the Comic Festival held in Bristol this May. Brown is already hard at work putting together a third issue, which is to premiere at the Comic Expo being held in Bristol from May 13 to 15.

*Above: This Jack Staff statue, which raised £111 – was the highlight of the **Just 1 Page** #2 auction. It was sculpted by Jesse Farrell who has promised to create a 'team up' statue for **Just 1 Page** 3.*

The theme for the 80-page **Just One Page** #3 is best battles and greatest team-ups with the topics covering such unlikely confrontations as Batman vs Transformers, Sid the Sexist vs the Four Marys and Rupert vs Biffo vs Pooh as well as the more usual Hulk vs the Thing and Dennis the Menace vs Walter.

Brown is still looking for contributors to the annual. Artists interested in providing a one-page strip, convention sketch or pin-up page can find further details at http://members.aol.com/just1page/J1P3.htm

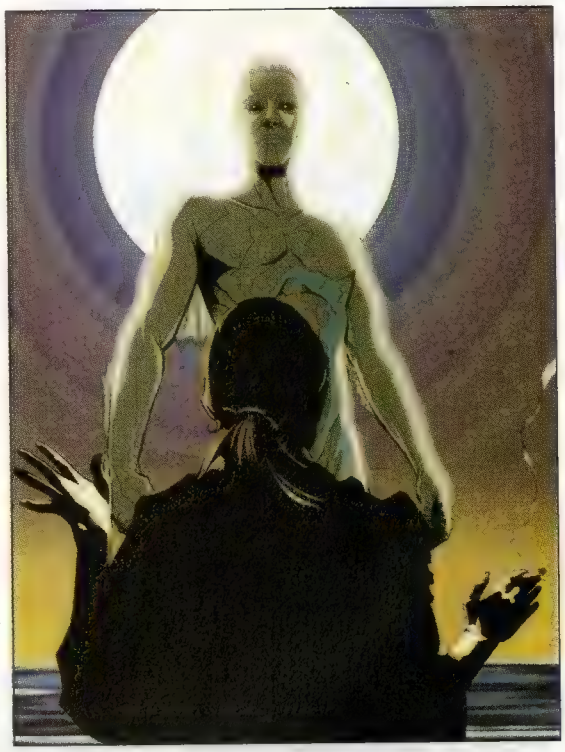
Superheroes fight World War II at Image

HAWAIIAN Dick writer B Clay Moore is offering his take on what might have happened had superheroes appeared during World War II – and how the US government might have reacted to them – in an Image four-parter.

Talking about his **Battle Hymn** with **CI**, Moore said, "The idea was inspired by flipping through some Golden Age reprints and noticing that these freakishly powered beings rarely seemed to run into a whole lot of government interference. If anything, they worked with the government, smashing Nazis and Japs to pieces."

Human Torch

"One of the first heroes to appear in the Golden Age was the Human Torch. Now, you tell me... a flaming android pops up and the United States government isn't swooping in to 'secure' him as quickly as possible? In my book, the government has set up a 'super team,' using a couple of their own heroes, in an effort to figure out exactly what they might be able to do with these freaks," explained the writer. "Not surprisingly, things don't go too smoothly from there."



*Pictured: Story pages from the first issue of Image's **Battle Hymn** six-parter; art by Jeremy Haun and Ande Parks.*

Asked why he had set the series during World War II, especially when – despite Roy Thomas's success with **The Invaders** in the 1970s and **All-Star Squadron** in the 1980s – Second World War superhero comics have become uncommercial in recent years, Moore replied, "Well, it's inspired by **The Invaders** or **All-Star Squadron** the same way **Watchmen** was inspired by cheesy '60s Charlton heroes or **Astro City** was inspired by Kurt Busiek's favourite '60s and '70s icons. I don't think any subject matter is that hard a sell if it's done well."

Crazy nature

According to Moore the main themes of the series – which is drawn by Jeremy (**Paradigm**) Haun and Ande (**Green Arrow**) Parks – are that you cannot manufacture heroes and that you cannot play with fire without getting burned. "And the government always wants to do both.

"As for the mood, it's fairly dark, with flashes of humour and bursts of action. There are moments of relatively shocking violence... each issue after the first has a moment where I hope readers go, 'Whoa!' Really, I just want to put together a well-regarded story that people will enjoy a lot more than they expected to."

***Battle Hymn** #1, priced $2.95, ships on December 22.*

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Irish publisher debut

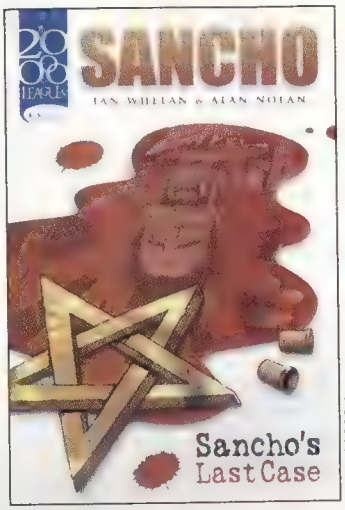
SANCHO'S Last Case is the inaugural title from the writer-artist team of Ian Whelan and Alan Nolan under their 20000 Leagues publishing imprint.

Based in Wicklow, Ireland, the creators launched the comic at the recent London Comics Winterfest to great acclaim and are currently working on a second issue of the 32 page art stock title.

Sancho tells of Jose Maria Garcia, aka Sancho, an ex-paranormal investigator and ex-exorcist who is called out of retirement by the mysterious and gruesome death of his former mentor.

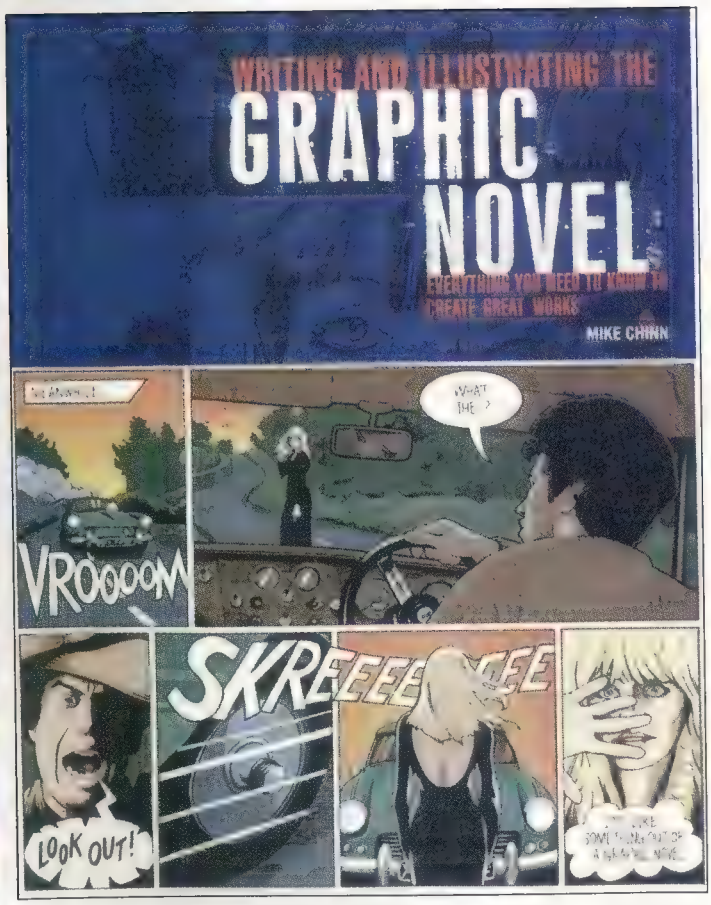
Aided by his two companions, a blind ex-Roman Catholic priest and his eight-inch familiar, Sancho must conquer many foes from his past, find out the terrifying truth about his own existence and face down his personal demon in this fast moving occult adventure.

Despite the highly polished and professional look of the title, from good use of solids and page design to its highly stylised lettering, this is the first comics work of Ian Whelan (writer) and Alan Nolan (co-writer and artist) who are currently in negotiation with Diamond Comic Distributors for the title to have wider exposure than the handful of shops currently stocking it.

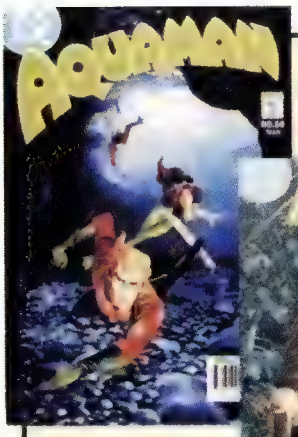


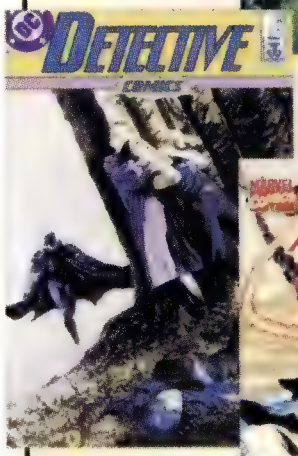
www.20000-leagues.com

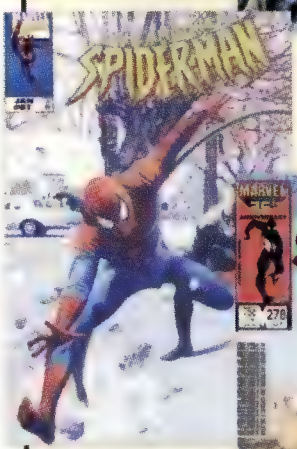
*Above: Alan Nolan's cover art for the first issue of **Sancho**, a £2.50/$3.50 oneshot from new Irish publisher 20000 Leagues.*

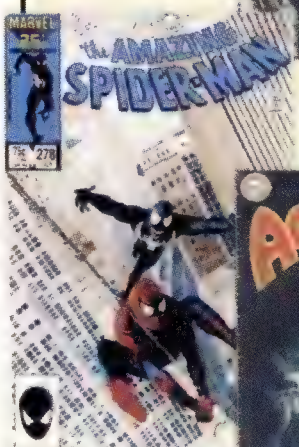


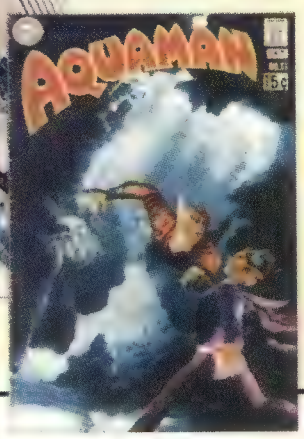
*AS ONE of the major growth areas for book publishers, graphic novels present a lucrative market when done well. Not so polished works can be a costly experiment. Guides to creating such works are an inevitable add-on, with much nonsense being published from supposed experts in the field. However, Mike Chinn's large format 128 page **Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel** is a well-researched, in-depth look at all stages from conception to publication, profusely illustrated with over 400 visuals and covering most genres. Published by London-based A&C Black, the £14.99 softcover (ISBN 0 7136 6998 5) goes on sale this month as a perfect Christmas present for would-be creators.*











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In Brief

DESPITE its 'no second printings' policy, Marvel is going back to press on the first issue of **New Avengers**.

The cover to this new edition of the $2.25 comic written by Brian Michael Bendis and drawn by David Finch and Danny Miki is to feature editor-in-chief Joe Quesada's original sketch for the variant covers for the first six issues of the series – the only way the art is to be made available as a single piece.

The second printing of **New Avengers** #1 hits the shops on December 15.

MARVEL'S usual practice when a new comic proves popular enough to warrant a second edition is to repackage it as one of its bargain-priced **Marvel Must Have** titles.

Latest to get that rush-released trade paperback treatment are **Wolverine** #20-22, the first three issue of the feral mutant's solo series written by Mark Millar and drawn by John Romita Jr. The new $3.99 package ships on December 22.

BLACK Mist is descending on AP Comics.

Written by Annika Eades – who has contributed to the St Albans-based publisher's **Monster Club** series – the four-parter is drawn by newcomer Lee Garbett. The mini – which is set in 1930s Japan – involves a group of Geishas, the Yakuza and the Japanese Government. Its premiere is scheduled for next April.

THERE is to be no **Fallen Angel** in January or February.

Under the mistaken impression the Peter David-written DC series was to end with #18, series artists David Lopez and Fernando Blanco took another assignment, which they had to complete before returning to draw issue #19.

Scheduled for March, that $2.95 comic integrates into the DC Universe Sach and Violens – the duo David and artist George Pérez introduced in a 1993 Epic four-parter.

CHUCK Dixon is taking over **G.I. Joe: Reloaded**.

The former **Nightwing** writer, who is already writing **Breakdown** for Devil's Due, joins series artist Javier Saltares on the action figure tie-in as of #10, which ships in December.

WITH Arana moving to her own *Marvel Next* title *[see lead feature – page 5]*, Marvel's recently-relaunched **Amazing Fantasy** has become a title without a hero.

Lined up to fill the vacancy when the currently on-hiatus series returns in March is the Scorpion. The longtime Spider-Man foe was the winner of a recent online poll organised by Marvel to see who fans wanted spotlighted.

Stuffed Animal Militia battles evil Beasties on magical world

MIKE Bullock is hoping his **Lions, Tigers and Bears** will make children smile.

As the writer told **CI**, "One of the greatest things in the world is seeing a smile on a child's face. If I can create a story that does that, then I feel rewarded by it."

Monsters Inc

However, Bullock is certainly not looking to limit his target audience to children. "I'd love to know the book entertained as many people – from as many different age groups – and walks of life as possible. Folks who enjoy movies such as *Monsters Inc* or novels like **The Chronicles of Narnia** or the comic book **Abadazad** are folks I hope to reach."

A staunch advocate for more all-ages comics, Bullock, who is joined on his Image series by British **Darkham Vale** artist Jack Lawrence, continued, "Does the comic industry really need another mature title right now? No. There are plenty of great ones out there. **The Walking Dead**... **Small Gods**... **Mortal Coils**... these are all great mature comics. The industry needs more great all-ages books, books of the same calibre as those I mentioned – just not mature reads.

"If Jack and I can create a story that parents can read with their kids, everyday comic fans can read and people who don't read comics can read and all of them can enjoy the story equally, then we've succeeded," he stated.

Evil Beasties

As for the story, Bullock said the Image four-parter, which chronicles the adventures of a young boy, begins on a world much like our own. "Joey is rapidly transported to the Stuffed Animal Kingdom, a magical world where the forces of the Stuffed Animal Militia have been battling with the evil Beasties since time immemorial."

***Lions, Tigers and Bears** #1, priced 2.95, ships on January 26.*

*Pictured: From the cover to the first issue of **Lions, Tigers and Bears** [above] and the cast from the Runemaster Studios' all-ages Image Comics four-parter [top]; art by Jack Lawrence.*

Hellblazer gets movie tie-ins

VERTIGO is celebrating the release of *Constantine* by spotlighting its protagonist in a clutch of special projects.

The movie, which opens in the US on February 18, focuses on **Hellblazer**'s John Constantine as portrayed by Keanu Reeves. It is being adapted by Steven T Seagle and artists Ron Randall and Jimmy Palmiotti in the 64-page **Constantine: The Official Movie Adaptation** *[cover left]*. The $6.95 one-shot ships on January 5 as does the $14.95 **Constantine: The Hellblazer Collection**. This 164-page trade paperback includes the adaptation of the supernatural thriller together with reprints of three classic **Hellblazer** issues.

More reprints are the focus of **John Constantine: Hellblazer – Rare Cuts**, a 160-pager which follows a week later. Another $14.95 title, it contains six issues of the Vertigo series that have not been collected until now.

Shipping on January 19 is the hardcover **John Constantine: Hellblazer – All His Engines**. Priced $24.95, this 128-page original graphic novel is from **Hellblazer**'s current creative team, Mike Carey and artist Leonardo Manco. *[For full details see **CI** #178.]*

Rounding the celebrations off is **John Constantine: Hellblazer Special – Papa Midnite**, a $2.95 five-parter that premieres on February 2.

*Above: Ronald Wimberley's cover art for **Papa Midnite** #1.*

The mini, which is drawn by **Fables** fill in artist Tony Akins and Dan (**Uncanny X-Men**) Green, is written by Mat Johnson, author of **Hunting in Harlem**. It reveals the origin of the immortal voodoo sorcerer/gangster/nightclub owner who is Constantine's deadly nemesis.

Concrete resurfaces

STRANGE Armor, the most recent **Concrete** series, finished in 1998. Its writer/artist Paul Chadwick has devoted much of the six years since researching the theme of **The Human Dilemma**, the latest mini to feature Ron Lithgow, the speechwriter whose mind was suddenly removed from his body and placed into that of an immense extraterrestrial – one with a rocklike shell for skin.

"I've long thought the population explosion was humanity's biggest challenge," Chadwick said while discussing his new black and white Dark Horse four-parter with **CI**. "But it's fallen out of public discourse, because it isn't a sudden, sexy threat. That, by nature, is all humans seem to be able to react to – witness America's overreaction to terrorism.

"So," he continued, "in a story about overpopulation, I focus on that – fatal? – flaw and other sides of human nature: the drive to sex and marriage – tied to overpopulation, the drive to collect and acquire – which magnifies its impact, the drive for a legacy and children."

Chadwick explained that **The Human Dilemma** sees Lithgow's assistant, Larry, on the verge of getting married while Concrete is driven into a reckless act to acquire a painting he simply must have. In addition, Concrete and Maureen – the biologist who studies him – find themselves, suddenly, parents. "There's also a psychopathic stalker in the wings."

Asked the significance of the title, Chadwick said, "The Human Dilemma is the population explosion, its destructive impact and our innate difficulty in dealing with any long-term, slowly developing problem."

As for what sets **Concrete** apart from other comics, Chadwick believes it is its personal voice and its real-world setting. "I'm not dealing with complicated continuities of super-beings. Concrete inhabits our familiar world. It's also a bit political, which is fairly rare."

*Above: Paul Chadwick's cover art for the final chapter of **Concrete: The Human Dilemma**, his Dark Horse four-parter.*

***Concrete: The Human Dilemma** #1, priced $2.99, ships in December.*

"GET THE Adventure Started! Introduce a child to comics." is the promotional slogan for a campaign to promote children's literacy. Target, the Minnesota-based retail giant which has aligned itself with Marvel, is to carry the New York-based publisher's comics – including 17 exclusive titles – in its chain of stores. The father/son team of John Romita Sr and Jr have drawn the advertising art [above] *for the initiative.*

Thanks to distributors Columbia Tristar, 10 lucky readers will win copies of both Jonathon Hensleigh's *Punisher* and Guillermo Del Toro's *Hellboy* movies on either DVD or video. The Ron Perlman/John Hurt-starring *Hellboy* (£22.99 DVD; £12.99 VHS) will be available to buy or rent on January 10, with the Thomas Jane/John Travolta *Punisher* (£15.99 DVD; £12.99 VHS) following on January 24.

To enter, simply choose the correct answer to the following question:

Ron Perlman featured in which other comics spin-off movie?

a) X-Men 2
b) Blade 2
c) Spider-Man 2

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The winners will be selected and announced in Comics International #181

Please also complete the following:
My five favourite features this issue are (please mark in order as *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th* – no ticks):

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___ NEWS ROUNDUP
___ SEZ DEZ
___ TALKING SHOP
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
___ ADVANCE LISTINGS
___ IN THE GUTTER
___ NETWORKS
___ Q&A
___ REVIEWS
___ REVIEWS EXTRA: VIZ
___ COMICS ECONOMICS
___ LETTERS
___ COMIC CUTS
___ EVENTS GUIDE
___ ADVERTISEMENTS
___ COMPETITION
___ DIRECTORY

PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped reading, the one you wish we'd replace with a new contender for the top spot:

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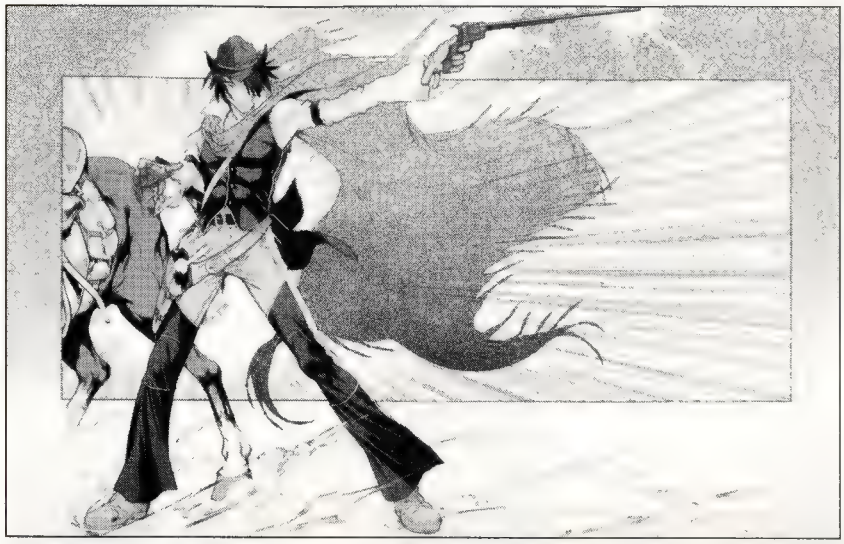
New US manga publisher elects for home-grown



*SEVEN Seas Entertainment launches in February with four titles – **Amazing Agent Luna, Blade for Barter, Last Hope** and **No Man's Land**. Shown above: A double-page spread from the Dallas Middaugh-written **Last Hope**; art by newcomer Kris Sison.*

WHILE the burgeoning mainstream book store market for Japanese comics is attracting companies as diverse as Viz, TokyoPop, Random House and DC, a new entrant into the manga publishing arena is looking to build an audience by originating similarly-styled material originated by American creators.

Asked why Seven Seas has chosen to concentrate on what has been dubbed Ameri-manga, the Los Angeles-based newcomer's chief executive officer, Dallas Middaugh told **CI**, "Actually, we want to stay away from the term Ameri-manga because it's become associated with low sales, at least when compared to the sales of contemporary manga in American bookstores. Jason [DeAngelis, Seven Seas' president] and I prefer the term 'original manga', since it better describes what we are trying to do – tell stories in the style of Japanese manga.

"While a lot of American artists have been influenced by manga stylistically, this usually manifests in the form of character design and art style," Middaugh, the former director of manga sales and marketing for Viz and director of manga at Del Rey Books continued. "There is a lot more to manga than big eyes and speed lines, and it's only in rare cases that manga has actually informed the way American comics stories have been told. There's an energy and dynamism in manga that is completely different from American comics, and that's what we're trying to capture."

Holmes' "Irregulars" take centre stage

UNTIL now the Baker Street Irregulars were simply "six dirty little scoundrels" who assisted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary detective, Sherlock Holmes, on just two cases – *The Sign of Four* and *A Study In Scarlet*.

Now best-selling author Steven-Elliot Altman – whose credits include **The Touch: Epidemic of the Millennium** and **Zen in the Art of Slaying Vampires** – along with **Star Wars: Darth Maul – Shadow Hunter** novelist Michael Reaves are shining the spotlight on the Victorian street orphans. They have made these youngsters the stars of **The Irregulars**, a 128-page 6x9" Dark Horse graphic novel drawn in black and white by Filipino newcomer Bong Dazo.

Asked why they wanted to focus on such minor players in the Holmes' canon, Altman responded, "It's precisely the fact that they were minor players that attracted us to them. Like Tom Stoppard's Rosencranz and Gildenstern, they're background characters brought to the foreground and we had a free hand developing them."

Foot soldiers

As for why, given their backgrounds, the writers chose to pursue the idea in comics form rather than as a novel, he explained, "We're both authors, that's true, but we've also both written for TV and film... and Michael's got nifty street cred – and an Emmy – for writing *Batman: The Animated Series*. We went down to Comicon in San Diego and looked around at all the comicbooks and decided we wanted to try our hands at it. Besides, the drawn pages do make excellent storyboards, don't they?"

*Pictured: Two of the Bong Dazo-illustrated story pages from Dark Horse's 6x9" 128-page black and white graphic novel, **The Irregulars**.*

Moving on to the story itself, Altman said, ""Sherlock Holmes's Victorian London is our setting. Our band of Irregulars, led by a headstrong young man named Wiggins, is gathered together *Mission Impossible* style when Holmes needs help on a case. The Irregulars are Sherlock's foot soldiers, and Wiggins selects them according to their required talents."

The writer explained this first adventure, *Hands of Darkness, Hearts of Light*, is about "the evil hands that are working behind the scenes to frame Watson for a murder he did not commit and how the giant hearts of our young heroes are what is required to conquer that darkness.

Altman concluded, "You'll see why Holmes could not have solved this one alone."

***The Irregulars**, priced $12.95, ships on January 12.*

Eagle Award winners 2004

WITH over 13,000 voting forms received via post, email and website counting centres, the 2004 Eagle Awards – for material published in 2003 – were the most successful in the awards' 28 year history. Despite these record-breaking levels, voting in many categories was very tight with nominees running neck and neck. In some instances, winners were only being decided with the last few votes cast.

The complete list of winners follows:

- **FAVOURITE COLOUR COMIC-BOOK** Fantastic Four [Marvel Comics]
- **FAVOURITE BLACK & WHITE COMICBOOK** Bone [Cartoon Books]
- **FAVOURITE NEW COMIC-BOOK** Conan [Dark Horse]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS WRITER** J. Michael Straczynski
- **FAVOURITE COMICS WRITER/ ARTIST** Mike Mignola
- **FAVOURITE COMICS ARTIST: PENCILS** Jim Lee
- **FAVOURITE COMICS ARTIST: INKS** Scott Williams
- **FAVOURITE COMICS ARTIST: PAINTED ART** Alex Ross
- **FAVOURITE COLOURIST** Laura Martin
- **FAVOURITE COMICS EDITOR** Axel Alonso [Marvel Comics]
- **FAVOURITE MANGA COMIC** Blade of the Immortal [Dark Horse]
- **FAVOURITE EUROPEAN COMIC** Tex [Sergio Bonelli Editore, Italy]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS CHARACTER** Batman [DC Comics]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS STORY** Daredevil #46-50: Hardcore [Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev]
- **CHARACTER MOST WORTHY OF HAVING THEIR OWN TITLE** Doctor Strange [Marvel]
- **FAVOURITE SUPPORTING CHARACTER IN COMICS** Mary Jane Watson [Spider-Man – Marvel Comics]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS COVER** JLA: Liberty and Justice [Alex Ross]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS VILLAIN** Doctor Doom [Fantastic Four – Marvel]
- **FAVOURITE GRAPHIC NOVEL** Sgt Rock: Between Hell and a Hard Place [Brian Azzarello/Joe Kubert]
- **FAVOURITE REPRINT COMPILATION** Chronicles of Conan [Dark Horse]
- **FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER STRIP** Mutts [Patrick McDonnell]
- **FAVOURITE MAGAZINE ABOUT COMICS** The Comics Journal [Fantagraphics Books]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS-RELATED BOOK** Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross [Chip Kidd/Geoff Spear]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS-BASED MOVIE** X2 [Bryan Singer, director]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS-RELATED MERCHANDISE** Kingdom Come action figures [DC Select; 2nd series]
- **FAVOURITE BRITISH COMIC** Warhammer Monthly [Black Library]
- **FAVOURITE STRIP IN A UK COMIC** Judge Dredd [2000 AD/Judge Dredd Megazine – Rebellion]
- **FAVOURITE UK SMALL PRESS TITLE** Thrud the Barbarian [Carl Critchlow]
- **FAVOURITE COMICS-RELATED WEBSITE** Comicon.com
- **FAVOURITE COMICS E-ZINE** Newsarama
- **FAVOURITE WEB-BASED COMIC** PvP [Scott Kurtz]

ROLL OF HONOUR: Neil Gaiman. This category was an open vote this year and, despite the large volume of votes cast and attempts at ballot stuffing, none of the massive list of nominees for the award gathered more than a few hundred votes each.

CI #177 competition winners

IN **CI** #177, 20 readers were each offered the opportunity to each win copies of Collins & Brown's **500 Comicbook Villains** by our very own news editor Mike Conroy. The lucky winners were:

Darren Abbiss, London SE6
M Badham-Moore, Lincs
R Ballentine, Langley Park
Ellen Cassidy, Edinburgh
Jake Chatman, Ryton
Robert Cox, Welwyn
Robert Defty, Seaham
Ash Fitzgerald, London SE5
Peter Haroy, Burnage
Ellen Hill, Fleckney
Lorcan McGrane, Norwich
Steve Morrell, Sheffield
Aysha S Rahman, London
Graeme Robertson, E'burgh
Paul Seather, Hull
Haydn Sharman, W Bromwich
Peter Stasi, Sheffield
Keith Swaden, London SE21
Michael Waite, Malvern
Steven Walsh, Billingham

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (21.8%)
2 Reviews (12.3%)
3 Q&A (7.9%)
4 Advance Listings (7.7%)
5 Comment (6.6%)
6 Sez Dez (6.5%)
7 NetWorks (5.6%)
8 Letters/Comic Cuts (5.0%)
9 Talking Shop (4.9%)
10 Frame to Frame (4.1%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was "None, they're all fine" at 26.0%, with Talking Shop being the 9th most popular but also the least popular at 16.0% and Novel Graphics next at 12.0%.

Milligan on X-Men

*British **X-Statix** writer brings his idiosyncratic Vertigo-style approach to his most commercial assignment to date – Marvel's main mutant team*

FOR a writer who initially had no interest in comics, Peter Milligan has done extremely well in the medium.

Having blazed a very individualistic and offbeat path through a variety of titles across the past 26 years, he has reached the commercial pinnacle. After establishing his superhero credentials on **X-Statix**, Marvel's oddball mutant series, he has now moved on to the **X-Men**, a constant best-seller since it launched in 1991.

Milligan takes over the hugely popular $2.25 title with the January 19 issue. He joins artist Salvador Larroca with #166, the first episode of the *Golgotha* five-parter.

• Peter Milligan began his pro comics career in 1978 when his artist friend Brendan McCarthy persuaded him to write *The Electric Hoax*, a weekly one-pager that ran in the UK music paper, **Sounds**. It was the beginning of a partnership that would produce such diverse material as **Strange Days**, **Paradax** and the controversial **Skin** as well as *Sooner or Later* and *Bad Company* for **2000 AD** and *Rogan Gosh* for **Revolver**.

*Above: Salvador Larroca's cover art for **X-Men** #167, writer Pete Milligan's second issue on the top-selling Marvel title.*

The British writer began working for Vertigo with 1989's **Skreemer**. Other titles for the DC mature readers imprint followed, among them **Shade, the Changing Man**, **Animal Man**, **Egypt**, **Enigma**, **The Minx**, **Tank Girl: The Odyssey** and, most recently, **Human Target**.

In 1996 he wrote **Elektra** for Marvel. Since then his work for the New York-based publisher has included such titles as **The Further Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix**, **Wolverine/Punisher** and **X-Force** as well as **X-Statix**.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

Above; The second page of the Jabberwocky *sequence from Bryan Talbot's 300-page **Alice in Sunderland** graphic novel.*

Talbot looks for real Alice

FOR HIS follow up to **Heart of Empire**, Bryan Talbot is working on a project that is as much fact as fiction.

"**Alice in Sunderland** will be an approximately 300-page graphic novel with the themes of storytelling, history and myth in a form I've been describing as a 'dream documentary'," he told **CI**. "It is not one story but literally dozens, short and long, the central spines being the history of Sunderland and the story of Lewis Carroll and Alice Liddell – the 'real' Alice, both of whom had connections with the city and surrounding area."

To be published by an as-yet unnamed mainstream publisher, the graphic novel is first being serialised in **Words and Pictures** when the Coppervale Press anthology premieres next spring.

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Book Report

AS WELL as being the latest incarnation of a 1960s fanzine Roy Thomas put on hiatus until he resurrected it in 1998 as a TwoMorrows magazine, **Alter Ego** is also the title of a superhero four-parter the former Marvel editor-in-chief wrote for the now-defunct First Comics in 1986.

A collected version of that mini is to be released by Heroic Publishing early in 2005. Drawn by Ron Harris, The 128-page **Alter Ego** trade paperback is priced $17.95.

FORMER Marvel editor-in-chief Tom DeFalco is working on a follow up to his **Comics Creators on Spider-Man**.

Set for release next summer as a tie-in with the *Fantastic Four* movie, **Comics Creators on Fantastic Four** features interviews the **Spider-Girl** writer has conducted with Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, John Byrne, Walter Simonson, Mark Waid, Jim Lee and Carlos Pacheco among others. Publication of **Comics Creators on X-Men**, DeFalco's third volume in the Titan Books series, is being scheduled to coincide with the 2006 opening of the third *X-Men* film.

WITH a series of biographies of historical figures in graphic novel form in the pipeline, Rosen Publishing is to turn its attention to comics creators later in 2005.

The educational publisher's proposed *Library of Graphic Novelists* line is to consist of six 112-page trade paperbacks. One each of the 6x9" books is to be devoted to Art Spiegelman, Bryan Talbot, Colleen Doran, Joe Sacco, Neil Gaiman and Will Eisner.

NO DOUBT hoping for a share of the booming manga market, Devil's Due is developing a line of black and white books in the digest format popular with readers of the Japanese comics.

'Its *D3* imprint launches in January with Franco Aureliani and Art Baltazar's **Patrick the Wolfboy** and **Misplaced** by Josh Blaylock with Clint Hilinski. Both titles are to include some new material.

TITAN Books also appears to be hoping some of the manga magic will rub off on its new **Transformers** series, which is also in the successful manga digest format.

The currently unscheduled black and white softcovers are to reprint material from the robots in disguise's UK title that has not previously been collected. The books are to feature contributions from Simon Furman and artists Geoff Senior and Andrew Wildman among others.

...news round up...news round up...news round up...news round

Spectacular Spider-Man no more

AFTER suffering several bouts of ill-health, Paul Jenkins has decided to cut back on his workload.

The writer is to drop **Spectacular Spider-Man** from his schedule, a move that has prompted Marvel to axe the title. "Much like **Ultimate Team-Up** was a vehicle created for Brian Bendis to shine and then cancelled with his departure, the same can be said about **Spectacular Spider-Man**, which was created for Paul and Humberto [Ramos] to tell their brand of Spider-Man stories," stated Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada.

Jenkins' last issue – #27 – is set to ship next March. It follows *Sins Remembered*, a four-part fill-in written by **Doctor Spectrum**'s Sara 'Samm' Barnes and pencilled by Scot Eaton, which began on January 5 in issue #23 of the $2.25 comic.

Image writer/artist team splits up

THE **REX Mundi** team of Arvid Nelson and Eric J has broken up.

While Nelson is currently seeking a new artist to join him on the Image series, his former partner is bringing forward **Revisionary**, his planned Moonstone one-shot, while considering other offers.

A series set in an alternate Earth version of 1930s Paris where the Roman Catholic still holds sway, **Rex Mundi** has been on hiatus since October's #12. The $2.95 issue #13 *[see cover, left]* – the last to be drawn by Eric J – is currently scheduled for February.

Superman/Batman writer quits

JEPH Loeb is to leave **Superman/Batman**, the DC team-up title he launched with artist Ed McGuinness.

Rumoured to be replacing him – for at least three or four issues – is former **JSA** co-writer David Goyer, who scripted the currently in post-production *Batman Begins*. Loeb's last issue is #25, which ships next September.

Intergalactic Ninja returns

ZEN IS moving to the Canada-based SSS Comics.

The blue-skinned intergalactic ninja is returning in his own bimonthly series. Subtitled **Bounty Hunter**, the $2.95 black and white comic debuts in January. It is written by the former Entity Comics hero's co-creator Steve Stern and drawn by Bill Maus, who many consider to be the definitive Zen artist.

In 2003, the writer announced plans to resurrect the alien, who had a huge cult following in the late 1980s, as the star of an ongoing series released through his own Zen Comics Publishing but it released only one issue – drawn by Maus – of **Zen**.

Tank Girl makes come back

ALAN Martin and Jamie Hewlett are planning to resurrect their signature character in 2005.

The writer/artist duo are bringing back **Tank Girl** in two 48-page prestige format one-shots for Titan Books.

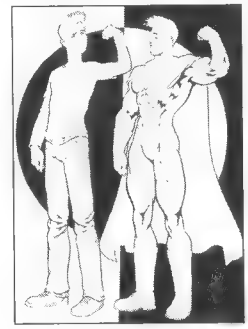
Introduced in **Deadline**, the punk heroine's adventures have been published by Dark Horse and Vertigo, which also released an adaptation of 1995's misconceived *Tank Girl* movie starring Lori Petty in the title role.

Shape-shifting mutant homeless

MARVEL is cancelling **Mystique** with effect from #24, which ships on February 23.

That final $2.99 of the shape-shifting mutant's title is pencilled by Manuel Garcia and written by Sean McKeever, who said, "For those keeping score, this is the third Marvel series I've had cancelled – fourth if you want to count **Mary Jane**, which many folks do, even though it technically isn't – and, yeah, it sucks. You start to worry that maybe Marvel will decide that it's because of your writing talents that your books are projected to dip into the red-ink zone, you start to doubt your abilities a little, et cetera..."

Accident leads to Hero Squared delay



FORMERLY Known as the Just League writers Keith Giffen and J M DeMatteis's **Hero Squared X-Tra-Sized Special** #1 has been pushed back from November to December.

The delay is the result of injuries sustained in an accident by artist Joe Abraham. These prevented him from completing the $3.99 Atomeka one-shot on time.

The special introduces Milo, a teenage slacker on Earth who is the superhero known as Captain Valor on a parallel world.

UK magazine offers Marvel statues

EAGLEMOSS Publications is developing a comics-based partwork for release in mid-2005.

The **Classic Marvel Figurine Collection**, which is to run to 60 fortnightly issues, is to include a hand-painted lead statue of a major Marvel hero or villain with each part. No price has yet been fixed for the new title, which is similar in format to the London-based publisher's **The Lord of the Rings Collector's Models** although it is to feature a greater magazine content.

Beta Ray Bill gets extension

MARVEL is extending its **Stormbreaker: The Saga of Beta Ray Bill** miniseries from five issues to six.

Written by Michael Avon Oeming and Daniel Berman and pencilled by Andrea di Vito, the $2.99 **Thor** spin-off is scheduled to hit the shelves on January 12 *[see first issue cover artwork, left]*.

Also going up from five issues to six is **Fantastic Four: Foes** by Robert Kirkman and penciller Cliff Rathburn. Another $2.99 series, it premieres on January 5.

Foes is a look at the FF's battles from their antagonists' points of view. It seeks to answer why such enemies as the Puppet Master, the Mad Thinker and Annihilus continue to war with Marvel's first family despite repeated defeats.

Indie publisher shuts up shop

HIGHWATER Books, which published work by such alternative cartoonists as James Kochalka, Ivan Brunetti, Mat Brinkman and Tom Devlin, has ceased trading.

"It's always been difficult to make a living publishing alternative comics

people in the news...people

DC HAS placed James Shoop – who sculpted the JLA action figures and the forthcoming Green Lantern action figures for DC Direct – under an exclusive two-year contract.

AFTER a short sojourn at the Florida-based CrossGen, Bill Rosemann has returned to New York City.

Rosemann, who was *Your Man@Marvel* until his move south, has now joined DC in the newly created position of manager – creative services. His department is responsible for, among other things, maintaining DC's website, producing and managing custom comics, special projects and advertising inserts.

AS A result of Erik Larsen's appointment as publisher, Image's managing editor Eric Stephenson has been promoted to executive director.

Discussing Stephenson's promotion, Larsen said, "It's

round up...news round up...news round up...news round up.....

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news

and it took me several years to figure out how to run Highwater efficiently," explained Devlin, who owned the Montreal-based indie publisher. "Unfortunately, by then my debt was huge and I was still paying for mistakes that were years old. This past year, I looked at the future likelihood of putting that debt behind me and decided it wouldn't happen while working a full-time job and running a comics company full-time. Too many full-time jobs."

Dark Age postponed

The launch of **Astro City: The Dark Age** has been delayed.

Written by Kurt Busiek and drawn by Brent Anderson, the first issue *[see cover artwork, left]* of the $2.95 DC/WildStorm, 12-parter was originally scheduled for December 22. It is to be resolicited at a later date.

Discussing the series, Busiek said, "It's our biggest, longest, most sprawling epic to date, following two brothers – one an Astro City cop, one a criminal – as they deal with personal tragedy and with life in Astro City throughout the '70s and '80s. This is the story that was originally going to be **Marvels 2**, though we've changed it around a lot – a lot – as we've developed it into an **Astro City** tale.

"It's also the story that deals with how things went dark for super-heroes and for the city in the '70s," the writer added. "It'll finally reveal the story of how the Silver Agent died and why he's got that memorial statue with the strange epitaph."

From Identity Crisis to Superman

IDENTITY Crisis artist Rages Morales is to pencil **Adventures of Superman** #636.

A tie-in with the hugely popular seven-part murder mystery written by Brad Meltzer, the $2.50 issue is scripted by Greg Rucka and inked by John Dell. It ships on January 19.

Young Image heroes make Pact

NOW that plans for an Image All-Stars team consisting of Spawn, Witchblade, the Savage Dragon and ShadowHawk have fallen through, the California-based co-operative is resurrecting one of its earlier superhero groups.

Introduced in 1994, The Pact is returning but with a new line-up. Standing alongside ShadowHawk in a four-parter set to debut in March are Invincible, Firebreather and **Noble Causes**' Zephyr.

Each standalone issue of **The Pact** comic is being written by the creator of one of the team members. Jim Valentino is writing and drawing the first issue while Jay (**Noble Causes**) Faerber writes #2, which is drawn by Carlo Barberi. They are followed by Phil (**Firebreather**) Hester and artist Carlos Rodriquez with **Invincible**'s Robert Kirkman and artist Jason Howard producing the final issue.

Describing The Pact, **ShadowHawk**'s Valentino said, "They're a loose affiliation of disenfranchised youths who just happen to have superpowers. They get together to listen to music, eat pizza, bitch about their parents and school and occasionally fight supervillains. All the things real kids do in their every day life."

Schultz takes over newspaper strip

ON NOVEMBER 21, **Xenozoic Tales** creator Mark Schultz begins writing *Prince Valiant*, which is drawn by Gary Gianni.

He takes over from Cullen Murphy, who has been working on the King Features newspaper strip since 1974.

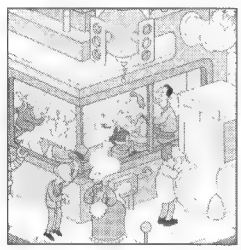
Murphy chose to retire following the death of his father, John Cullen Murphy – *Prince Valiant*'s illustrator for over three decades – earlier this year.

Identity Crisis #2 reprinted

DC IS going back to press with the 40-page second issue of **Identity Crisis**, the seven-part murder mystery written by crime novelist Brad Meltzer and drawn by Rags Morales and Michael Bair.

Set to hit the shops on December 1, the second printing of the $3.50 comic is to feature a previously unpublished pencil illustration by Morales on its cover.

Simpsons in 30th century



BONGO Comics is planning a second comicbook meeting between the casts from Matt Groening's two hit animated TV shows.

A sequel to the 2003 two-issue **Futurama/Simpsons Infinitely Secret Crossover Crisis**, the new **Simpsons/Futurama Crossover Crisis Part II** kicks off in January.

Another two-parter, the $2.99 mini *[see art, left]* flings the citizens of Springfield into the future where they are turned into slaves.

The series is written by Ian Boothby and drawn by James Lloyd.

End of axed series delayed

THE MONOLITH #10 is to ship a month late.

Originally due to hit the shops on November 3, the $2.95 comic has been rescheduled for December. DC has yet to announce whether this delay will have a knock-on effect on the final two issues of the series created by Jimmy Palmiotti and Justin Gray with artist Phil Winslade which is being axed with #12.

Bill Jemas resurfaces

FORMER Marvel executives Bill Jemas and Russ Brown have set up 360ep, an entertainment property management company.

Based in New Jersey, the company is to provide turnkey creative services for toy, game and publishing companies looking to make their concepts, characters and stories into viable entertainment and merchandising properties. It is planning to develop those properties through online and print publishing of comicbook and manga-style stories.

According to reports, Jemas – at one time Marvel's president of publishing and chief operating officer – has been recruiting top comicbook writers and artists to help 360ep's clients develop their characters and build their brand identity.

Rebirth goes back to press

THE RESURRECTION is Hal Jordan is proving such a hit that DC is going back to print for a second time with the first issue of **Green Lantern: Rebirth**.

The third edition of the $2.95 comic written by Geoff Johns and drawn by Ethan Van Sciver ships on December 1. It is to feature a variant version of the artist's cover to the first printing.

Hitting the shops on the same day is the second printing of #2, which also features a variant version of Van Sciver's original cover art for that $2.95 issue.

In the news... people in the news

more reflective of what he's actually doing – it's a better title that better fits his day to day work. He's not really an editor per se, so it makes sense for him to be called that, rather than managing editor."

TOKYOPOP has hired Jim De Vico as director of operations where he is to manage the Los Angeles-based manga publisher's human resources, information systems and administration departments.

He replaces Mike Kiley who has moved over to become TokyoPop editor-in-chief.

ROBERT Simpson is to be senior books editor on Dark Horse's prose imprints, DH Press and M Press.

Simpson, who started out as an intern with Marvel in 1982, joins the Oregon-based company following stints as an editor for Nickelodeon, *Vibe*, *Maxim* and *Stuff* magazine's book division.

Manga launches

DARK Horse is expanding its manga line with the first English-language release of a comic by Katsuya Terada, designer of the *Blood: The Last Vampire* anime.

The Monkey King, which originally appeared in Japan's **Ultra Jump** magazine, is based on *Journey to the West*, the classic 16th century Chinese adventure story that also inspired **Dragon Ball**. Aimed at the adults only market, the first 6x8¼" full colour 136-page volume ships on April 27, priced $14.95.

TOKYOPOP has added three more Nickelodeon properties to its line of Cine-Manga titles, which use images from a movie or TV series in conjunction with word balloons and captions to tell the story.

The new additions are **All Grown Up (Rugrats)**, **The Amanda Show** and **The SpongeBob Squarepants Movie**. All three $7.99 titles debut in May.

ONE OF the contributors to Boychild Productions' forthcoming **Manga Movers** sparked a bidding war between two major US publishers.

Hyperion Books, the American publishing arm of the Disney entertainment empire, beat out Henry Holt and has signed Misako Takashima to a multi-book deal. Born in Japan but now residing in Wisconsin, her first Hyperion manga – the tentatively entitled **Ride On!** – is unlikely to appear until 2006.

PRINCESS Tutu debuts from ADV Films in January.

The $9.99 two-parter, which is drawn by Mizuo Shinonome, is based on the anime created by Izuko Ito and Junici Satou.

TOKYOPOP has announced three new titles for March.

Heaven Above Heaven – a martial arts manwha by Hyun Kang-Suk and Jeon Joong-Won, **Shaolin Sisters: Reborn** – a sequel to the **Shaolin Sisters** manga by Narumi Kakinouchi and Toshiki Hirano – and a second manwha, an adventure title in which an online game plays a major role. **iDX** is by **PhD: Phantasy Degree**'s Son Hee-Joon and Kim Yoon-Kyung.

DIGITAL Manga Publishing is to publish a manga in the yaoi genre – stories of romance between male characters.

Yellow is set to launch next autumn. The ongoing series by Makoto Tateno is already up to volume four in Japan.

Digital Manga is also planning an as-yet unscheduled **Yaoi** edition in its **Let's Draw Manga** series.

Yaoi titles are generally created by women and most of the readers are also female.

news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

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COMIX
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Development Hell ready to release Alan Moore's long-lost Warrior project

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest interaction between films and comics

THE MOVIE version of Alan Moore and David Lloyd's **V for Vendetta** has struggled to reach the screen. In the late 1990s, prior to filming 1999's *The Matrix*, Larry and Andy Wachowski wrote a screenplay based on the series but, for whatever reason, the project never got off the ground, languishing in development hell for years. But that was then and this is now.

James McTeigue, who worked as the Wachowski Brothers' first assistant director, is being lined up to helm the movie for Warner Bros. *V for Vendetta* is being produced by the Wachowski's in conjunction with Joel Silver and that's when the worries begin.

Silver tends to work in the action genre. His CV is littered with such movies as *The Last Boy Scout*, *Action Jackson*, *Commando*, *48 Hours* and *Demolition Man* as well as the *Lethal Weapon*, *Die Hard* and *Predator* franchises. It also includes *Gothika*, *Dungeons & Dragons* and the underrated *Hudson Hawk* but that's another story.

The one thing *V for Vendetta* isn't – or at least shouldn't be – is an action flick. The story Moore and Lloyd began telling in the pages of **Warrior** in 1982 is more subtle than that. It has more in common with George Orwell's **1984** – albeit with an anarchic protagonist who dresses like Guy Fawkes – than it does with *Exit Wounds* or *Cradle 2: the Grave*.

It's focus is one man – some would say a terrorist – battling the totalitarian government that has destroyed England's economy and left it isolated from the rest of the world. V is fighting the repressive regime with words rather than weapons and if that isn't reflected in the film it won't be *V for Vendetta*.

Margaret Thatcher

Equally, the series – which was reprinted and completed by DC Comics in 1988 – is peculiarly British. It was written while the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher were staunchly entrenched in Government and at a time of rising unemployment and rioting on the streets of Britain.

But we're talking a major US studio behind *V for Vendetta*. One that won't want another *Bend it like Beckham* or even *The Full Monty*. It doesn't like the risk attached to foreign films... Warner's will almost certainly want everything Americanised. It's happened before...

Look at the inclusion of Tom Sawyer in the movie based on Moore and Kevin O'Neill's **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen**. It was a series that – accepting Captain Nemo's creator, Jules Verne, was French – brought together characters from classic Victorian English literature. What did they do for the movie? Go and stick a bloody Yank in it "for the American audiences".

Surfer dude

Or looking ahead to early next year there's the casting of surfer dude Keanu Reeves as John Constantine, **Hellblazer**'s somewhat seedy English mage. And the action has been relocated to Los Angeles, probably because those American audiences can't relate to an English setting.

But it's all very well moaning about what Hollywood does to comicbook concepts once it gets its claws into them. We know there are going to be changes made – some of them radical. It's the nature of the beast. Different mediums require different sensibilities.

What comics fans have to hope for is that what gets up on the screen is faithful to the spirit of the original. *The League of Extraordinary Gentleman* wasn't very good and that had nothing to do with Tom Sawyer's inclusion.

Catwoman was another dire comicbook movie but the jury's still out on *Constantine* though many have condemned it sight unseen simply because of Keanu's presence. Or should that be lack of it?

Sometimes we win... *Spider-Man 2*... *X-Men 2*... *Hellboy*... Sometimes we lose. All we can ask is that we get as much entertainment bang off of our movie as we do out of our comicbook reading.

It's easy to pick holes but, if we go to the cinema with a cynical, nit-picking chip on our shoulder expecting the worst that's what we're going to get. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Watchmen update

Also moving steadily towards production is the movie version of Moore and Dave Gibbons' 1986 magnum opus, **Watchmen**.

Until recently the project was trapped, like *V for Vendetta*, in development hell but it is now moving forward at a rate of knots. It has a script – by David Hayter, who wrote *X-Men* and *X2* and is scheduled to write *Iron Man* and *Black Widow* – and although director Darren Aronofsky has pulled out of the project due to scheduling conflicts, he has been quickly replaced. *The Bourne Supremacy*'s Paul Greengrass is now helming the film, which is said to be on track for a 2006 release.

Above: He can obviously do the wimpy Clark Kent bit but is new Superman *star Brandon Routh – pictured here at a 2003 Halloween party – cut out to be the Man of Steel? Below: From the* Fantastic Four *movie – a first look at Julian McMahon as Doctor Doom. Below left: All set for action – Christian Bales dons the cape and cowl for* Batman Begins.

And finally...

Lightening the mood more than a tad, it looks like Sergio Aragones' havoc-wreaking Groo the barbarian could finally be on his way to the big screen courtesy of Mark Toberoff's Intellectual Properties Worldwide.

As the Spanish artist's writing collaborator, Mark Evanier announced, "In the 23 years Groo has been around, we have been approached over and over with offers but never before with one we felt we could accept."

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With Great Power Comes ...Whatever They Want

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

MARVEL has just shafted every retailer in the country. To their credit, their ambition was much broader: they tried to shaft everyone in the US as well.

Why? Because they reckoned they could. How? By declining to abide by their own trade terms; by refusing to accept returns on comics that were over 30 days late, or substantially different from the promised content.

Delays cost customers. Tastes change, interest wanes, people (as the letters column here has borne out) get pissed off. As to the content, if a comic has Mark Millar's and Bryan Hitch's name attached to it, we can sell it in triple figures. Substitute them at the last minute with Dame Christopher Claremont and Rob "tiny toes" Liefeld, and it's going to bomb. That's why there is – or why we thought there was – a standard returns policy for delays or changes, which every publisher to my knowledge has abided by. Except Marvel, who, a couple of years ago, said (not quite verbatim), "Fuck you!"

Let me put it like this: at Page 45, if something's faulty – for example, if the pages come out of a book on the first couple of reads – we'll refund your money. If you've bought a comic on our recommendation and it didn't live up to our promise, if it's returned in perfect condition, you can exchange it. You don't have to keep the receipt/price tag; we'll know if it's been bought from us. We just want customers to have hassle-free shopping.

So if you bought a comic from us, and upon its return we said, "Sorry, changed our minds - you paid your money and you tooks yer choice"... you *might* feel slightly aggrieved. That's what happened here. Only the scale was much larger.

In May 2002, Brian Hibbs of Comix Experience, one of the most prescient and respected retailers in the US, author of **Tilting At Windmills** (the most vital book for anyone involved or intending to be involved in this industry to grab hold of, being ten years of pithy, provocative and overwhelmingly sound monthly columns) said: "Since the middle of 2001, I began to notice how many Marvel comics were shipping late, or with different content or creative teams than we had ordered. These late and mis-solicited titles were clearly costing me sales. I tracked just the 30+ day late shipping books for an eight-month period and...I was shocked to find that Marvel shipped over $6.2 million dollars in contractually late material!"

So Hibbs stood up on behalf of other retailers and brought a Class Action Suit against them. "I would have given anything to have not filed this suit," Hibbs said, "but repeated queries to both Marvel and their distributor, Diamond Comics, brought no satisfaction in them living up to their Terms of Sale. What frustrates me is that Marvel set those terms themselves, and they're not living up to their most basic promises."

And because of the exemplary courage of this man, Marvel got their legal arses handed to them and have just been forced to dish out compensation to comicshop owners all over the globe – including one in the Sultanate of Brunei. The only shops which haven't been reimbursed for Marvel's flagrant and dishonourable breach of terms of sale are British - or more accurately, those serviced by distributors Diamond UK.

And I empathize with Brian's repeated queries, because once he'd won his case and it emerged that the UK was not to be compensated, I wrote to Diamond and Marvel, and was met with a mixed response. I asked Roger Fletcher at Diamond US why UK retailers weren't being compensated. His reply [italics mine]: "During the period in question, Diamond UK *represented* Marvel as a Sales Agent/Broker. As a *Sales Agent*, Diamond was *responsible for* distributing Marvel's product to Marvel's customers/retailers under the trade terms Marvel *established*. It so happens that for Diamond *UK*, Marvel chose to mirror the Terms of Sale of Diamond *UK*. Marvel did not adopt Diamond's other policies.

"As you are aware, Diamond *UK*'s Terms Of Sale state "While we are in no way respon-sible for the late delivery or changes in price, content or contributors by suppliers, we shall, *whenever possible*, make such mis-solicited items returnable and announce the same in Diamond Dateline each week. Such items may not be returned until authorized in Diamond Dateline."

> The only shops which haven't been reimbursed for Marvel's flagrant and dishonourable breach of terms are British

"As you also point out, *Diamond* has a "*standard* 30-day cancellation/returns policy" in place. This *policy*, however, is *contingent upon Diamond being able to secure the cooperation of its suppliers*...

"In this case, that will not be possible as we have conferred with Marvel and been advised that the claims in the Hibbs litigation involved the Marvel terms of sale applicable to Diamond U.S. and only retailers who purchased the specified issues pursuant to those terms of sale are included in the class and maybe entitled to credit."

As I replied to Roger, that's not a policy, it's an *aspiration*. Everyone's dodging legal loopholes, no one is playing the game.

To be fair to Diamond, they did at least respond. To be equally fair to Marvel, when I asked Dan Buckley there whether they thought it would be decent to live up to the spirit of their wrist-slapping and compensate UK retailers as well, he didn't even deign to reply. Such disdain. Such contempt.

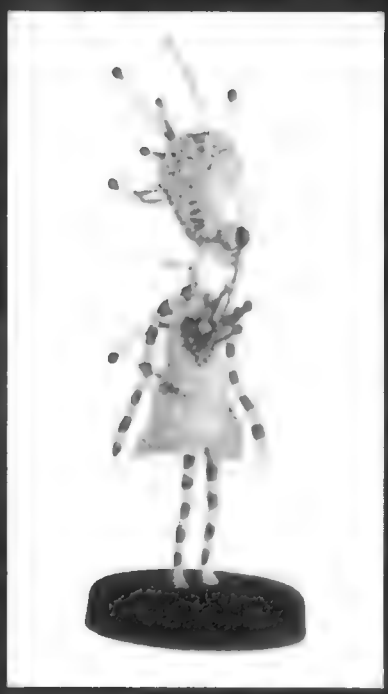
So there's a lesson here for retailers: although no other company would, I am sure, risk such ill will, although no other publisher would dream of pissing on you from such a great height, you cannot rely on Diamond UK's returns "aspiration", and you most certainly shouldn't put your faith in Marvel, because they've since changed their policy internationally, and that next project written by Bendis could just as easily end up being written by *me*.

And you wouldn't want to read that!

Stephen Holland runs Page 45 in Nottingham with Mark Simpson & Tom Rosin.

DAVE'S COMICS

new for november



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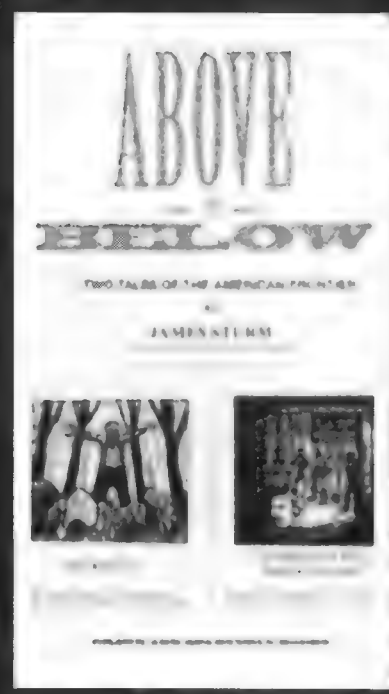

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Compiled by Jim Hannah

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM
JAN 5

Dark Horse

one-shot **Frank Miller's Sin City** (Frank Miller) *Sin City* is currently being made into a movie, so get this volume and secure your position as 'the one who liked it before it was popular'. Mature readers. 208pg b&w $17.00

Samurai: Heaven and Earth 2 (of 5; Ron Marz & Luke Ross) Lady Yoshiko, love of the samurai Shiro, has been spirited away, kidnapped by Chinese invaders to be kept as a plaything for a cruel warlord. $2.99

Star Wars: Empire 29 *(Sons* 1 of 5; Thomas Andrews & Adriana Melo + Michael Atiyeh) Emperor Palpatine is not willing to allow the inhabitants of Jabiimi to forceably boot his stormtroopers off the planet. $2.99

DC Comics

one-shot **The Authority: Fractured Worlds** (Robbie Morrison & Dwayne Turner + Sal Regla; tpbk) Collecting issues #6-10. The Authority has assumed control of the government of the US, but it won't be an easy road, as the American people aren't all for it! Don't get me started. Mature readers 208pg $17.95

one-shot **Bad Company: Goodbye Krool World** (Peter Milligan & Brett Ewins + Jim McCarthy; tpbk) Danny Franks knew signing up for the war against the Krool would be hard, but he had no idea the real horrors would be on his side! 256pg b&w $17.95

new **Breach** 1 (Bob Harras & Marcos Martin + Alvaro Lopez) At heart Major Tim Porter is just a man torn between conscience and duty. But nothing could have prepared him to lose decades from his life and most of his humanity. 40pg $2.95

one-shot **Catwoman: Relentless** (Ed Brubaker & Cameron Stewart + Javier Pulido; tpbk) Reprinting Catwoman #12-19, plus the 6-page Black Mask story from Catwoman Secret Files #1. Catwoman has crossed the Black Mask – now he's making her pay! 192pg $19.95

one-shot **Constantine: The Hellblazer Collection** (various) Collects the official 64-page Vertigo adaptation of the film along with three classic issues – #11, which kicked off the series, #27, which brought Sandman creator Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean to the title, and #41, which opens the *Dangerous Habits* storyline. Mature readers. 168pg $14.95

one-shot **Constantine: The Official Movie Adaptation** (Steven T. Seagle & Ron Randall + Jimmy Palmiotti) When Constantine teams up with skeptical policewoman Angela Dodson to solve the mysterious suicide of her twin sister, their investigation takes them through the world of demons and angels that exists just beneath the landscape of contemporary Los Angeles. Mature readers. 64pg $6.95

one-shot **Danger Girl: Odd Jobs** (Andy Hartnell & various; tpbk) Featuring the Hawaiian Punch and Viva Las Danger specials as well as a Danger Girl special featuring a tale by Arthur Adams and a unique DG story done in collaboration by J. Scott Campbell & Joe Chiodo. 136pg $14.95

Deadshot 2 (of 5; Christos N. Gage & Steven Cummings + Jimmy Palmiotti) Deadshot fights to make a crime-infested neighbourhood safe for his daughter and her mum. But now even the cops want him gone, and have brought in the Emerald Archer to help them! ... $2.95

Detective Comics 802 *(City of Crime* 2 of 12; David Lapham + Mike Carey & Ramon Bachs + Nathan Massengill) Batman's investigation into the murder of a young woman reveals more and more layers of death and corruption. 40pg $2.95

Firestorm 9 (Dan Jolley & Jamal Igle + Rob Stull) Can Jason and his accidental ally, Lorraine Reilly, survive the vicious onslaught – or will the villain's newly enhanced powers overwhelm them? $2.50

Hard Time 12 (Steve Gerber & Brian Hurtt) Travelling outside his body, inmate Ethan Harrow saves a life. Trapped inside his body, he's falling in love and about to turn 16. ..... $2.50

The Intimates 3 (Joe Casey & various) Will a late-night romantic rendezvous interfere with Sykes's Blaster Pill marathon? $2.95

Justice League Elite 7 (of 12; Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) In the aftermath of its clash with the JSA, a startling secret is revealed about a member of the Elite! $2.50

Justice League Unlimited 5 (Adam Beechen & Carlo Barberi + Walden Wong) Blue Beetle is all ready to enjoy a relaxing night of monitor duty at the Watchtower, but when chaos erupts across the globe, he realizes he's the only team member on call. $2.25

Looney Tunes 122 (Frank Strom & Earl Kress + various) Sylvester, Tweety, Duck Dodgers – plus all-new tales of everyone's favourite daydreamer, Ralph Phillips! $2.25

Mad 450 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) The side-splitting 450th issue is here, just in time to celebrate the new year! 48pg $3.50

Madara Vol 2 (various) Madara and Kaosu must team up to fight a deadly duo out to kill the both of them. And now, as fate would have it, Madara and Kaos prepare to face-off one another in the Corridor of Fire. Will destiny prevail? Or will desire? Mature readers. 176pg b&w .. $9.95

The Question 3 (of 6; Rick Veitch & Tommy Lee Edwards) The Question rains terror upon the Subterraneans' criminal operations through Metropolis–striking those that fall beneath the eyes of the Man of Steel. $2.95

new **Superman: Strength** 1 (of 3; Scott McCloud & Aluir Amancio + Terry Austin) A young Clark Kent watches in awe as his supernatural abilities steadily grow, and he stands at the brink of a new world of power and possibilities. 48pg $5.95

one-shot **Superman: Unconventional Warfare** (Greg Rucka & Matthew Clark + various; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below.*

Swamp Thing 11 *(Love in Vain* 3 of 4; Joshua Dysart & Enrique Breccia) Arcane and his demon paramour Josephine have adopted new, more dangerous forms. Still, Arcane wants Josephine to gain the powers of an elemental, and that means his designs are set on the hospitalised Tefé. Mature readers. $2.95

Toe Tags Featuring George Romero 4 (George Romero & Tommy Castillo + Rodney Ramos) Damien Cross struggles for control of what's left of planet Earth. As the army of the resurrected dead swarm the land, there appears to be a rift growing between their Zombie General and his lieutenant, Rasputin. Mature readers. $2.95

Wild Girl 3 (of 6; Leah Moore & various) As Rosa and Hylax plot to defeat the Dogman, they turn to Limmershin for help. But who is this mysterious character that wields such power and control over animals? $2.95

Y: The Last Man 30 *(Ring of Truth* 4 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + José Marzan Jr.) It's a dysfunctional family reunion when Yorick is reunited with his sister Hero. Will they continue their deadly rivalry, or has the ex-Amazon seen the error of her vicious ways? Mature readers. $2.95

close-up

Superman: Unconventional Warfare

DC Comics

Writer: Greg Rucka

Artists: Matthew Clark + various

This volume sets about collecting the two back-up stories from Adventures of Superman #625-626 plus all of issues #627-632 in addition to Secret Files Profile Pages. The Man of Steel is challenged when a more powerful Replikon arrives for a fight – the first layer of a complex scheme that may prove Superman's undoing. 160pg . $14.95

ON SALE JANUARY 5

Marvel

Alpha Flight 11 *(Days of Future Present, Past Participle* 3 of 4; Scott Lobdell) Find out what would have happened if the original Alpha Flight had become American heroes. $2.99

Captain America & The Falcon 11 *(Brothers & Keepers (Adelphoite Phylaxes)* 4 of 5; Christopher Priest) Cap tracks Modok to his secret lair but discovers the unexpected: Modok doesn't know him! $2.99

new **Combat Zone: True Tales of GIs in Iraq** 1 (of 5; Karl Zinsmeister & Dan Jurgens) American paratroopers in northern Kuwait must contend with choking sandstorms, high-adrenaline training, and the hair-trigger tension that dominates the tense run-up to war in Iraq. $2.99

one-shot **Elektra: The Hand** (Akira Yoshida & Christian Gossett; tpbk) Elektra witnesses a mystic ceremony that leads her to the never-before-revealed origin of the Hand, the world's most deadly assassins! Collects Elektra: The Hand #1-5. 120pg $13.99

one-shot **Elektra Movie** (various; tpbk) Collects the Elektra movie adaptation, Elektra's first appearance from Daredevil #168, her death at the hands of Bullseye from Daredevil #181 and a special flashback from Elektra Minus 1. 136pg $13.99

new **Fantastic Four: Foes** 1 (of 5; Robert Kirkman & Cliff Rathburn) After years of continued defeat at the hands of the FF, why would a person continue to attempt something he has learned to be impossible? See things from the Puppet Master and The Mad Thinker's perspective. $2.99

Incredible Hulk 77 *(Tempest Fugit* 1 of 5; Peter David) As a long-buried episode from Bruce Banner's youth begins to surface with possible ramifications for the future, the Hulk finds himself washed up on a strange island, populated by several hapless victims. $2.99

Jubilee 5 (of 6; Robert Kirkman & Derec Donovan) Dale Spangler has ditched Jubilee for the school dance, but when the going gets tough, the tough go to the mall! $2.99

Marvel Age Fantastic Four 11 (Marc Sumerak & Joseph Dodd) From the Mole Man to the Puppet Master, the Fantastic Four have faced off against some of the strangest villains of all time...but nothing could prepare them for their most bizarre adversary ever: The Impossible Man. $2.25

Marvel Age Spider-Man 19 (Mike Raicht & Valentine De Landro) Will Spidey's webs be able to combat the Scorpion's sting? And if that's not enough to worry about, someone's following Peter Parker around town. $2.25

Marvel Knights 2099 (Robert Kirkman & various; tpbk) Collects Marvel Knights 2099: Daredevil 1, Marvel Knights 2099: Black Panther 1, Marvel Knights 2099: Inhumans 1, Marvel Knights 2099: Punisher 1 and Marvel Knights 2099: Mutant 1. 120pg $13.99

Marvel Team-Up 4 (Robert Kirkman) Tony Stark is on a mission that must succeed no matter what the cost. The stakes are high and failure is not an option. There's one big problem–The Incredible Hulk stands in his way! $2.25

one-shot **Powerless** (Matt Cherniss & Peter Johnson + Michael Gaydos; tpbk) By re-imagining Marvel's most popular characters without superhuman powers, this story strips down to the core heroes we all know. Collects Powerless 1-6. 144pg $14.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 23 *(Sins Remembered* 1 of 4, Sara Barnes & Scot Eaton) Spider-Man and Sarah, the daughter of Gwen Stacy and the web-slinger's greatest enemy, embark on a journey of discovery-one that will take them halfway around the world to Paris, and into the sights of a mysterious new enemy! $2.25

Spider-Girl 82 (Tom Defalco) Venom is back and this time he's targeting Spider-Girl's closest friends! Plus: Mary Jane makes a startling discovery! $2.99

new **Spider-Man/Human Torch** 1 (of 5: Dan Slott & Ty Templeton) See what happens when young Johnny Storm wants some of Spidey's front page exposure – and hires Peter Parker to be *his* personal photographer! $2.99

Spider-Man Unlimited 7 (Bill Rosemann + Matt Manning & Mike Perkins + Karl Moline) A chance encounter with the wall-crawler changes the life of a cubicle-dwelling office worker. $2.99

Tomb of Dracula 4 (Rob Rodi & Jamie Tolagson) The waves of vampire attacks grow more frequent and more lethal as Blade and his team of slayers inch their way towards Castle Dracula. $2.99

one-shot **Ultimate Elektra: Devil's Due** (Mike Carey; tpbk) Matt Murdock – desperate to see Elektra Natchios again – makes an attempt to contact this mysterious young woman, putting himself squarely in the crosshairs of the biggest crime boss in New York City: Ultimate Kingpin! Collects Ultimate Elektra #1-5. 120pg $11.99

Uncanny X-Men 454 (Chris Claremont & Andy Park) The X-Men come face-to-face with the newly assembled Lords Cardinal of the sinister Hellfire Club! $2.25

X-Men/Fantastic Four 2 (of 5; Akira Yoshida) The X-Men and the Fantastic Four have gone into space, and found some very scary stuff. But the real threat to their mission might just be among themselves. $3.50

new **X-Men: Phoenix – Endsong** 1 (of 5; Greg Pak) What will happen when the Phoenix returns to Earth in search of the one mortal who could ever contain its power – only to find her dead? $2.99

ON SALE FROM

JAN 12

Dark Horse

new **Apocalypse Nerd** 1 (of 6; Peter Bagge) Our protagonist, an asthma ridden, myopic former middle manager for a software company, has his limited survival skills continually put to the test, only to continually come up short. b&w $2.99

Berserk Vol 6 (Kentaro Miura; tpbk) The attraction between a king's daughter and elite mercenary Griffith – and the growing favour of the king towards him – raises the hackles of the king's jealous son, who plots to have Griffith summarily assassinated. 224pg b&w $13.95

Blade of the Immortal 97: Twilight (2 of 3; Hiroaki Samura) Giichi, a top Mugai-ryū assassin with a penchant for head collecting, has given the near-invincible warrior Manji an ultimatum: join the Mugai-ryū or die. Mature readers. , b&w $2.99

Bmwfilms.com's The Hire 3 (of 6; Mark Waid & Claude St. Aubin + Wil Glass) Why are the passenger and the Driver being pursued by thugs in semi-trucks and helicopters? And what to the Feds know about the situation that the Driver doesn't? $2.99

one-shot **The Irregulars** (Steven-Elliot Altman & Michael Reaves + Bong Dazo; tpbk) A madman stalks the streets of London's Whitechapel slum, leaving a trail of grisly murders in his wake. The police have only one suspect: a prominent and respected physician named John Watson. 128pg b&w $12.95

Michael Chabon Presents The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist 5 (various) A whole collection of stories, including the tale of a mesmerising saxophone player who forces her listeners to commit dastardly deeds, and a dictator who will crush his citizens' aspirations for freedom – starting with the Escapist. , 80pg $8.95

Oh My Goddess! Vol 19: Sora Unchained (Kosuke Fujishima; tpbk) The rough-and-ready crew at the Nakomi Tech motor club needs a new director, and meek-and-mild Sora Hasegawa's drawn the winning lot, a tall order in the midst of such macho machine-heads for someone who can barely drive a car. 312pg b&w $18.95

DC Comics

100 Bullets 57 (Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso) With the stage set and the major players in order, it's now time for the big showdown between Wylie, Sheppard, Dizzy and Graves. Mature readers. $2.50

Action Comics 823 (Chuck Austen & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) Superman is being beaten by an unlikely foe. Can Krypto save both Superman and Superboy from a terrible fate? .. $2.50

Angeltown 3 (of 5; Gary Phillips & Shawn Martinbrough) The search for Theophus Burnett heats up in the third issue of this new miniseries as beautiful bounty hunter Irma Deuce uncovers a major lead in the case. Mature readers. $2.95

Aquaman 26 (John Arcudi & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) Aquaman's new priority is Sub Diego's security as he cracks down on all illegal activity. Some citizens believe he's gone too far. $2.50

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 187 *(Riddle Me That* 3 of 5; Shane McCarthy & Tommy Castillo + Rodney Ramos) The transformation of Edward Nigma from second-rate has-been to villainous mastermind is revealed! $2.50

Batman Strikes 5 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) Scarface and the Ventriloquist are back. But when they attach a mini-Scarface dummy onto Batman's arm that's primed to set off bombs, can Batman get out of Scarface's trap without destroying Gotham City? $2.25

one-shot **Birds of Prey: Sensei & Student** (Gail Simone & various; tpbk) There's trouble brewing for the Birds in this thrilling new trade paperback collecting Birds of Prey #63-68 featuring guest appearances by a host of DCU heroines and villainesses. 168pg $17.95

Bloodhound 7 (Dan Jolley & Leonard Kirk + Robin Riggs) A grisly childhood trauma is revealed as Clevenger faces a super-criminal hiding behind prison walls! $2.95

Fables 33 *(The Year After* 4 of 4; Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham + Steve Leialoha) A mysterious death at the Farm, like the ones that have been plaguing Fabletown, mars the first birthday of Snow's offspring. Mature readers. $2.50

From Eroica with Love Vol 2 (Aoike Yasuko) The relationship between the Earl and the NATO officer reaches a whole new level. 208pg b&w $9.95

Gotham Central 27 (Ed Brubaker & Jason Alexander) After a robbery gone wrong, Catwoman is the prime suspect in the murder of a televangelist. Josie Mac knows better, but how can she tell her partner the evidence points elsewhere? $2.50

Green Arrow 46 (Judd Winick & Tom Fowler + Rodney Ramos) Ollie and one of his cohorts hit the West Coast to visit the Teen Titans. $2.50

new **The Incal Vol 1: The Epic Conspiracy** (Alexandro Jodorowsky & Moebius; tpbk) John Difool, a low class detective in a degenerate world, finds his life turned upside down when he discovers an ancient artifact called The Incal. Difool's adventures will bring him into conflict with the galaxy's greatest warrior, The Metabaron, and will pit him against the awesome powers of the Technopope. Mature readers. 160pg $19.95

JLA 110 *(Crime Syndicate of Amerika* 4 of 8; Kurt Busiek & Ron Garney + Dan Green) The CSA makes its boldest move yet: impersonating the JLA, bringing disgrace to the World's Greatest Heroes. $2.25

one-shot **John Constantine: Hellblazer – Rare Cuts** (various; tpbk) Issues featured include: #11, #25-26, #35, #56 and #84 plus informative pg from Vertigo Secret Files: Hellblazer 1. Mature readers. 160pg $14.95

JSA 69 *(JSA/JSA* 2 of 5; Geoff Johns & Don Kramer + Keith Champagne) It's 1951. Do you know where your heroes are? That's what Michael Holt, Courtney Whitmore, Doctor Pieter Cross, Sand Hawkins and the other new generation of JSAers are wondering. What has become of the heroes of yesterday? $2.50

new **Majestic** 1 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Neil Googe) Majestic is faced with the biggest – and most chilling – mystery of his life in *While You Were Out*, a story full of cosmic wonder, wit and earth-shaking superheroics! $2.95

The Monolith 12 (Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray + Phil Winslade) Monolith squares off against an army of dirty cops and attempts to shatter their slave-trade ring. Final issue. $2.95

Nightwing 101 *(Nightwing Year One* 1 of 6: Chuck Dixon & various) Before Dick Grayson can get on with life, he must look back at his early years, starting with his last caper as Robin. $2.25

Scooby-Doo 92 (John Rozum + Sholly Fisch & various) What's worse: the crazy fans at a creepy-movie convention, or the ghost running around it? The gang's about to find out! $2.25

one-shot **Seven Soldiers of Victory Archives** Vol 1 (various; hhbk) Collecting Leading Comics #1-4, featuring the adventures of The Seven Soldiers of Victory: The Crimson Avenger, Green Arrow, the Shining Knight The Vigilante, Speedy, Stripesy and the Star-Spangled Kid! 240pg $49.95

one-shot **Wonder Woman: Bitter Rivals** (Greg Rucka & various; tpbk) Reprinting Wonder Woman #201-205! Wonder Woman needs help solving the murder of Darrel Keyes, and who better to call than Batman? 128pg $12.95

Marvel

new **NEW Araña Vol 1: Heart of the Spider Digest** (Fiona Avery & Mark Brooks + Roger Cruz) Sugar and spice and everything nice –

Illuminations

Highlights from January's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

JANUARY is always a quiet month as people recover from the excesses of Christmas. Therefore the comics publishers keep new releases to a minimum and what there are this month, except for one, reflect that and are not very inspiring.

DC has as its main release **Breach** by Bob Harras (script) with art by Marcos Martin and Alvaro Lopez. The few pages on show in **Previews** tell us little except that the art is crisp and clear, conveying emotion well. The blurb says "Major Tim Porter, is he a threat to or saviour of humanity?" My gut reaction is, do I care? This is one of those releases where I have to question the rationale behind it. I see no niche waiting for it.

Sales 1/5 Quality 3/5

Image and Dark Horse have nothing new to offer, but Marvel has a few things worthy of note or brick bat. **NYX** as a series never got off the ground and suffered from creative delays for its very short life. Now from the pages of **NYX** comes **X-23**. This has lush Billy Tan art and C. Kyle and C. Yost scripts. The series is about a young female punk with Wolverine-style claws popping out of her knuckles and the series starts by looking at the relationship and connection with Wolverine. This could be more successful than **NYX**, but then that is not too difficult.

Sales 3/5 Quality 5/5

What is **Marvel Team-Up** for if not for teaming up various Marvel heroes in pointless fights, making up and then kicking villain butts? So if Marvel has this series just started why on earth bring out a **Spider-Man/Human Torch** miniseries which really belongs in the pages of the aforesaid comic. This has Marvel overkill stamped all over it.

Sales 2/5 Quality 3/5

Marvel also wins my prize for sickest miniseries of the year, even though this will only be January, **Combat Zone True Tales Of GIs in Iraq**. 'True' and 'truth' are the main words that we can never associate with Iraq and any of the decisions made before and during the war. Please avoid this title if at all possible.

Sales 0/5 Quality 0/5

Marvel's hit of the month has to be the return of Peter David to the scripting of **The Incredible Hulk** with #77. David must be feeling vindicated and maybe a little smug as he was removed as writer from the original Hulk series seven years ago when Marvel felt he was harming sales. What harmed sales was his removal; once he left sales plummeted and the series was cancelled. The relaunched series has sold well but has not been a massive success. David's take on the multiple personalities of the Hulk were both intriguing and exciting and I can only recommend that people start picking up the series again and watch a master storyteller at work.

Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5

The indie hit of the month is the return of **Grimjack** along with original creators Tim Truman, on art, and John Ostrander, on scripts. Back in 1984 these two young creators helped push First Comics to the fore with the creation of Grimjack, the ex-transdimensional cop now running a bar and moonlighting from time to time as a mercenary. He operates in Cynosure, a city at the nexus of all dimensions and the stories crossed cowboys and indians with space adventure, fantasy, horror and pulp fiction, creating something truly unique. IDW, which is becoming THE home of horror and all things weird, is the perfect company to promote this relaunch. Highly recommended. **Sales 5/5 Quality10/5** (out of this world).

With 23 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his **Illuminations** *monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.*

that's what this little girl is totally not made of. Collects Amazing Fantasy #1-6. 144pg $7.99

Avengers: Earth's Mightiest 5 (of 8; Joe Casey) One member of the Avengers is obsessed with revenge. Another is critically wounded in battle. Still another is on his way out the door! And exactly how is Jarvis laying the groundwork for the future of the superhero team? $3.50

District X #9 *(Underground* 3 of 6; David Hine & Lan Medina) As the murders and power outages increase in frequency, will Bishop and Ismael be able to stop the citywide panic? . $2.99

new **District X Vol 1: Mr M** (David Hine & David Yardin + Lan Medina; tpbk) Welcome to Mutant Town. Here, the mutant population doesn't sport GQ-style or champagne dreams. They eke out each day in squalid tenement rows and filthy streets where only one man and one law can be trusted: the X-Man Bishop. Collects District X #1-6. 144pg $14.99

Doctor Spectrum 5 (of 6; Sara Barnes & Travel Foreman; *Max Comics)* As Joe Ledger fights against the alien crystal for control of his memories and his humanity, the stage is set for an ultimate confrontation! Mature readers. .. $2.99

Gambit 6 (John Layman & Georges Jeanty) A heist gone horribly wrong has resulted in the death of someone close to Gambit, and the Ragin' Cajun is out for payback. $2.99

new **Marvel Age Spider-Man Team-Up Vol 1: A Little Help from My Friends Digest** (various) Some supervillains are too tough for even Spider-Man to handle alone! Collects Marvel Age Spider-Man Team-Up #1-4. 96pg $5.99

Marvel Knights 4 #14 *(Eyes Without a Face* 2 of 3; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muniz) The truth about the Puppet-Master's rehabilitation finally comes to light, but with Reed, Johnny, and Ben off-planet on an intergalactic mission of mercy, only the villain's stepdaughter Alicia can possibly save Sue from his horrific machinations. $2.99

Marvel Knights 4 Vol 2: The Stuff of Nightmares (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muniz, tpbk) While New York freezes in the icy grip of winter, an old foe resurfaces with a grudge: Namor! Collects Marvel Knights 4 #8-12. 120pg $13.99

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 10 (Mark Millar) Now that Spider-Man knows the identity of Aunt May's abductor, what's he going to do about it? $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Masterworks: The Uncanny X-Men** Vol 5 (Chris Claremont & various) Jean Grey has gained power beyond all comprehension, and that power has corrupted her absolutely! Now the X-Men must decide if the life of the woman they cherish is worth the existence of the entire universe! Collects X-Men #132-140, Annual 4 and the original X-Men #137 story where Jean Grey lived *Phoenix: The Untold Story*. 304pg $49.99

New Thunderbolts 4 (Fabian Nicieza) The New Thunderbolts are caught in the middle of a Hydra civil war and one of them is trying to hide complicity in a murder. $2.99

Powers 8 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming) A dead vigilante who ends up being the wrong guy in the right costume, a dead supervillian who ends up being the right guy in the wrong costume, a power crystal gone missing: Every clue opens another mystery! Mature readers. $2.95

Punisher 16 *(Mother Russia* 4 of 6; Garth Ennis & Dougie Braithwaite; *Max Comics)* Searching for a deadly retrovirus whose sale on the black market could bring the world to its knees, Frank Castle penetrates a Russian nuclear silo and comes face-to-face with the Mongolian. $2.99

She-Hulk 11 *(Balance of Power* 2 of 3; Dan Slott & Paul Pelletier) All of Manhattan is in peril as two amazons of unparalleled power duke it out in the streets! $2.99

new **Stormbreaker: The Saga of Beta Ray Bill** 1 (of 5; Michael Avon Oeming & Daniel Berman) Beta Ray Bill finds himself the sole survivor of all that was Asgard. Will he escape the end of one world only to face his own end? $2.99

The Pulse 7 *(Secret War* 2 of 5; Brian Michael Bendis & Brent Anderson) Luke Cage is missing and Jessica Jones will do whatever she can to find him. But who are the mystery men following her? $2.99

Thor: Son of Asgard 12 (Akira Yoshida & Greg Tocchini) Trapped in the clutches of Hela, Thor must challenge the Goddess of Death herself to spare the life of Lady Sif. After all he has been through, will his much-fabled enchanted hammer Mjolnir be of any help? $2.99

Ultimates 2 #2 *(Gods & Monsters* 2 of 5; Mark Millar) Who leaked the most terrible secret the Ultimates keep, and what does it have to do with Banner? $2.99

X-23 #1 (of 6; Craig Kyle & Christopher Yost) The full story behind the origin of X-23 – who she is, where she came from, and the exact nature of her relationship to Wolverine. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

JAN 19

Dark Horse

B.P.R.D.: The Dead 3 (of 5; Mike Mignola & John Arcudi + Guy Davis) The 80-year old German who'd been living in the basement, surviving on a diet of spiders and mushrooms since the 1950s, shares a story of Nazi scientists, occult technology, and the US death-ray cannon. $2.99

Conan 12 (Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord + Thomas Yeates) Even if Conan is willing to stand between Thoth and his intended victim, he may not get the chance – not if Janissa has her way. $2.99

Ghost in the Shell 2: Man-Machine Interface (Masamune Shirow; tpbk) Tamaki Tamai, a psychic investigator from the Channeling Agency, has been commissioned to investigate strange changes in the temporal universe, brought about by two forces, one represented by the teachings of a professor named Rahampol, and the other by the complex, evolving Motoko entity. 312pg $24.95

Megatokyo Vol 3 (Fred Gallagher; tpbk) Piro and Largo are still stuck in Japan, and this odd combination of anime/manga-obsessed fanboy and a hard-core gamer is stirring up trouble, and stringing together awkward crushes. 224pg b&w $9.95

DC Comics

one-shot **ABC Warriors: The Meknificent Seven** (Pat Mills & various) An Earth general has assembled a team of advanced robots – capable of withstanding atomic, bacterial or chemical attack – to finally conquer the devil planet! 136pg b&w $12.95

Adventures of Superman 636 (Greg Rucka & Rael Lyra + Jay Leisten) Superman, shaken by Lois's shooting and the events in *Identity Crisis*, looks to consult with Batman and Wonder Woman, and neither have the time or interest in helping him. $2.50

The Authority: Revolution 4 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend) The Authority meets Golden Age hero Paul Revere and his revolutionary movement head on in a battle for the ages! Mature readers. $2.95

Batman: Gotham Knights 61 (A.J. Lieberman & Al Barrionuevo & Bit) Things are heating up in Gotham in the wake of a revelation about Hush, and Ivy's Robinson Park orphans have started turning up dead – by their own hand. $2.50

Birds of Prey 78 *(Hero Hunters* 3 of 4; Gail Simone & Tom Derenick + Bob Petrecca) The Birds face the terrifying, life-stealing vigilante Harvest, and one member of the team may pay the ultimate price for her past! $2.50

Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 7 (Si Spencer & various) Fast times are about to accelerate for Tim Hunter and his mates following a funeral where an unexpected guest comes back from the dead. Mature readers. $2.50

Catwoman 39 (Scott Morse & Paul Gulacy + Jimmy Palmiotti) The mysterious group known as Three Piece Suit wants a piece of Catwoman, and so does their henchman, The Wooden Nickel. $2.50

one-shot **The Chaos Effect** (Pierre Christin & Enki Bilal) In *The Black Order Brigade*, an old terrorist group resurfaces with a series of bombings. It's up to the spies who thought they had destroyed the organisation to come out of retirement and put a stop to the terrorists' bloody agenda once and for all. Mature readers. 168pg $19.95

one-shot **Ex Machina: The First Hundred Days** (Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below*

Green Lantern Archives Vol 5 (Gardner Fox & various; hbk) The Emerald Gladiator squares off against foes such as Dr Light, Hector Hammond, Evil Star and many more! Reprints nine tales from Green Lantern #30-38. 240pg $49.95

Hawkman 36 (Justin Gray & various) An army of the undead soldiers rampages through the streets of St Roch, destroying everything and everyone in its path. $2.50

Human Target 18 (Peter Milligan & Javier Pulido) Berated and tortured by his captors, an innocent man sits bound, trapped and terrified in a tiny interrogation cell. Mature readers. $2.95

JLA Classified 3 (Grant Morrison & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) This issue uncovers the JLA just in time to aid the Ultra-Marines in the mother of all battles versus Gorilla Grodd's guerilla warriors. $2.95

Land of the Blindfolded Vol 2 (Tsukuba Sakura) When high-school student Outsuka Kanade touches people, sometimes she has visions of their future. Should she act to change their fate? 208pg b&w $9.95

Lucifer 58 (Mike Carey & Ronald Wimberly) Elaine and Lucifer escape into a new universe in a desperate attempt to get control over the demiurgic powers that Elaine absorbed from her father. Mature readers $2.50

Manhunter 6 (Marc Andreyko & Jesus Saiz + Jimmy Palmiotti) The eyes of America are on an LA federal courtroom as Kate Spencer not only faces the case of her career as a DA, but also must go on the attack as Manhunter against a cabal of villains out to nail the defendant. $2.50

Plastic Man 14 (Kyle Baker) Still more plasticky goodness, whipped up for your reading delight! $2.95

Powerpuff Girls 58 (various) Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow will stop our heroines from battling the storm-slinging Weather Girl! $2.25

Robin 134 (Bill Willingham & Damion Scott) Robin is uprooted to Blüdhaven, where he must operate on his own! With no school and no job, Tim Drake's life has narrowed to a single endeavour: crimefighting! $2.25

Space Ghost 3 (of 6; Joe Kelly & Ariel Olivetti) Space Ghost comes face-to-face with the adversary who ruined his life and turned him into a ghost! He can vanquish his old enemy, but at what cost to his soul? $2.95

Superman/Batman 17 *(Absolute Power* 4 of 5; Jeph Loeb & Carlos Pacheco + Jesus Merino) Superman finds himself in a world without a Batman! What happened to Bruce Wayne? And how do Ra's Ah Ghul, Sgt Rock & Easy Company, and The Haunted Tank all fit into this? $2.95

Teen Titans 20 (Geoff Johns & Tom Grummett + Nelson) Recovering from their trip through time, the Teen Titans are asked to track down one loose end from *Identity Crisis*: the armour of Lex Luthor! $2.50

Terra Obscura Vol 2 #5 (of 6; Alan Moore & Peter Hogan + Yanick Paquette; America's Best Comics) Tom Strange and Princess Pantha face dire peril in the depths of space at the hands of The Terror! $2.95

Trigger 2 (Jason Hall & John Watkiss) Deirdre Myers – a no-nonsense investigative reporter for the daily newsfeed The Relative Truth – looks for answers to a series of mysterious murders and their relation to the shadowy Triggers. Mature readers. $2.95

We3 #3 (of 3; Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely) Sick, wounded and hunted by soldiers and the terrifying We4 cyborgs, it's the end of the line for Bandit, Tinker and Pirate as their bid for freedom comes to a bitter, bloody conclusion. Mature readers. 40pg $2.95

Wonder Woman 212 (Greg Rucka & James Raiz + Ray Snyder) With Wonder Woman transformed by the battle with Medousa, the World's Greatest Super-Heroes worry that she's no longer fit to serve in their company. $2.25

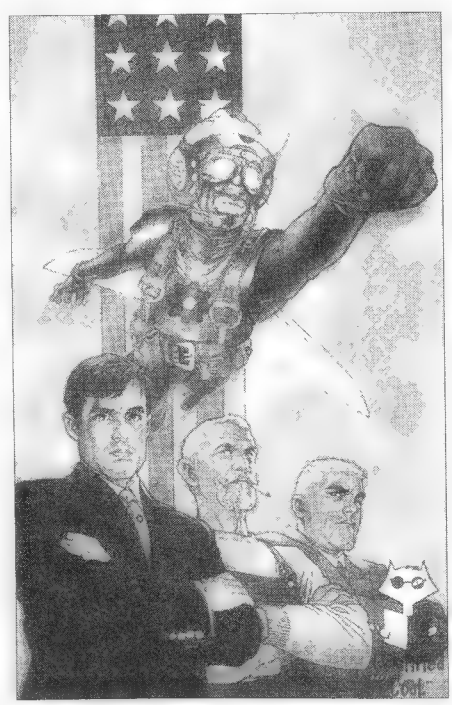
close-up

Ex Machina: The First Hundred Days

WildStorm

Writer: Brian K. Vaughan

Artists: Tony Harris + Tom Feister



Tells the story of civil engineer Mitchell Hundred, who becomes America's first living, breathing superhero after a strange accident gives him superpowers. Collects the first five issues of this political thriller, including the extra-sized origin of the superheroic Great Machine, as well as the four-part *State of Emergency*. Mature readers. 136pg $9.95

ON SALE JANUARY 19

Marvel

new **Araña: The Heart of the Spider** 1 *(Freshman Flu* 1 of 6; Fiona Avery & Roger Cruz) The continuing adventures of Anya Corazon, scrappy teen from Brooklyn by day, and by night, the butt-kicking Hunter of the ancient and mystical Spider Society. $2.99

Bullseye: Greatest Hits 5 (of 5; Daniel Way & Steve Dillon) Bullseye's pulled off some big tricks in his day – scrapes with the Punisher, Daredevil and Elektra, among them – but his next trick is a killer. $2.99

Cable/Deadpool 11 *(Thirty Pieces* 1 of 2; Fabian Nicieza) Cable is in a bad way, so now Deadpool has to save the day, even if it means confronting his fear of very big-headed villains! $2.99

Daredevil 69 *(Golden Age* 4 of 4; Brian Michael Bendis) With Daredevil down for the count, a new hero must

rise! Who carries the legacy of the White Tiger? $2.99

new **Essential Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man** Vol 1 (various) Spidey faces some of his most fearsome foes – including Tarantula, Kraven, Lightmaster, Vulture, Hitman, Morbius, Brother Power, Hate Monger, Beetle and the Enforcers! Collects Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man #1-31. 568pg b&w $16.99

Exiles 58 (Tony Bedard) Sasquatch's body has been possessed by the evil Tanaraq, whose only goal is to return to his own reality and claim that world for his own. $2.99

new **Hulk Visionaries: Peter David** Vol 1 (Peter David; tpbk) See how it all began for Peter David in this first string of Hulk stories as the grey-skinned goliath – or is that the sardonic strongman? Collects Incredible Hulk #331-339. 224pg $19.99

Madrox 5 (of 5; Peter David & Pablo Raimondi) The truth behind Clay's mysterious employer is revealed along with a shocking secret about himself. $2.99

Marvel Age Fantastic Four 12 (Marc Sumerak & Joseph Dodd) Titans clash as the Fantastic Four encounter Marvel Age's mightiest monster, the Hulk. $2.25

Marvel Age Spider-Man 20 (Mike Raicht & Valentine De Landro) The Webbed Wonder and the Fantastic Four's youngest member compete for the attention of a girl. It's what superheroes do on days off. $2.25

Marvel Knights Spider-Man Vol 2: Venomous (Mark Millar & Terry Dodson + Frank Cho; tpbk) As Spider-Man continues to search for Aunt May, things go from bad to worse for the wall-crawler: Venom is back. Collects Marvel Knights Spider-Man #5-8. 96pg $9.99

New Invaders 6 *(Oil & Water* 1 of 3; Allan Jacobsen & Jorge Lucas) The New Invaders vs Hydra! Namor vs Wolverine! And a nation hangs in the balance! $2.99

New X-Men 9 (Christina Weir & Michael Ryan) There's something haunting the Xavier Institute, and it's not happy. Can the New Mutants find a way to bring peace to this tortured being before they become the tortured? $2.99

Nightcrawler 5 *(Ghosts on the Rails* 1 of 2; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) Nightcrawler spends some quality time in his natural habitat – the dark. This spooky adventure takes our blue furry friend into the bowels of the New York subway. $2.99

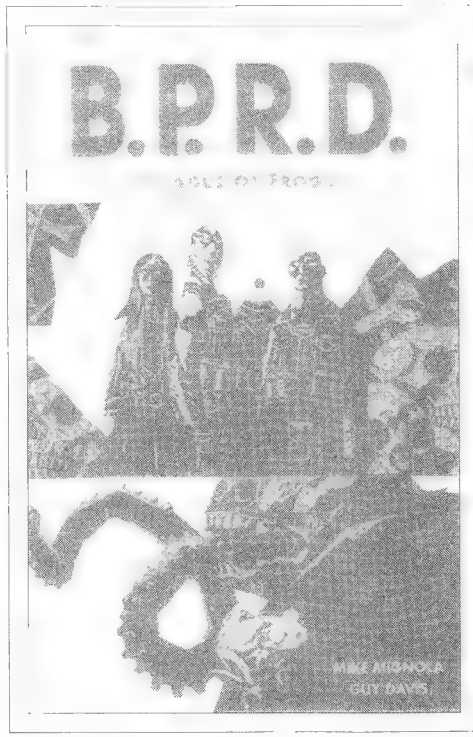
Rogue 7 (Tony Bedard & Karl Moline) Rogue may be a hero now, but once upon a time she wasn't so sweet, and that criminal past may just come back to haunt her! $2.99

Spider-Man: India 3 (of 5; Jeevan J. Kang & Suresh Seetharaman + Sharad Devarajan) Young Pavitr Prabhakar faces his first supervillain when a friendly neighbourhood cricket game is crashed by none other than Doctor Octopus. .. $2.99

Stoker's Dracula 3 (of 4; Roy Thomas) Lucy Westenra's death is not as final as it would seem as she stalks the neighbourhoods surrounding her tomb. 48pg b&w $3.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 71 *(Sorcerer Supreme* 2 of 2; Brian Michael Bendis) Peter Parker has somehow become involved in a mystery involving sorcerer Stephen Strange! Will our dazed and deluded hero get to the bottom of this? $2.25

Ultimate X-Men 55 *(Longshot* 2 of 3; Brian Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) While the X-Men arrive on Krakoa to aid a mutant trapped in a game where contestants hunt mutants on the island, the longest surviving prey, Longshot, becomes the object of the ultimate gamesman – Arcade! $2.25



close-up

BPRD: Plague of Frogs

Dark Horse Comics

Writer: Mike Mignola

Artist: Guy Davis + Dave Stewart

The story of Abe Sapien's origin unfolds as the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense tries to stop the monstrous frog men from the first Hellboy graphic novel, Seed of Destruction. The plague begins its spread across America, lending an apocalyptic new direction to the series. This volume collects the five-issue miniseries. 144pg $17.95

ON SALE JANUARY 26

Wolverine 24 *(Enemy of the State* 5 of 6; Mark Millar) The frenzy of destruction shows no sign of stopping as a brainwashed Wolverine locks down New York during his deadly mission for Hydra and the Hand $2.25

X-Force 6 (of 6; Fabian Nicieza & Rob Liefeld) Cable and X-Force engage in deadly combat with the horror that is The Skornn! Who will make the final sacrifice in order to defeat the terrible mutant threat? $2.99

X-Men 166 *(Golgotha* 1 of 5; Peter Milligan) The X-Men travel to Antarctica to respond to an SOS from a colony of mutants, and what they find is far more shocking than they expected! $2.25

ON SALE FROM

JAN 26

Dark Horse

one-shot **B.P.R.D.: Plague of Frogs** (Mike Mignola & Guy Davis + Dave Stewart; tpbk) *See Close-Up, above.*

Concrete: The Human Dilemma 2 (of 6; Paul Chadwick) Though Concrete believes overpopulation to be an important issue, does he want to become the spokesperson for a controversial new population control programme? Mature Readers. b&w $3.50

one-shot **Don Bluth's The Art of Animation** (Don Bluth; tpbk) Companion textbook to 2004's The Art of Storyboard, focusing on the process of designing characters; adapting those characters to script, voice talent, and music; directing performances; the timing and rhythm of movement and more. 112pg $14.95

one-shot **El Zombo Fantasma** (Kevin Munroe & Dave Wilkins + Sean Galloway; tpbk) El Zombo Fantasma has fallen into a strange land of purgatory, and the only way to avoid an eternity of fiery damnation is to return to Los Angeles and guard the well-being of a struggling young spitfire, 10-year old Belisa Montoya. 88pg $9.95

The Incredibles 3 (of 4; Brad Bird & Ricardo Curtis + Ramon Perez) On the remote island of Nomanisan, Mr Incredible discovers the villain Syndrome is hatching a diabolical plot, when he is suddenly captured by the evil genius. $2.99

Jingle Belle 3 (of 4; Paul Dini & Jose Garibaldi) Determined to prove herself worthy of the Claus legacy, Jingle leaves the North Pole to take over a struggling Santaville amusement park. $2.99

Shadow Star Vol 6: What Can I Do For You Now? (Mohiro Kitoh; tpbk) A group of dragon bearers has set their Shadow Dragons against the Japan Self-Defense Force, with destruction and death as the predictable conclusion. Collecting stories from Super Manga Blast! #31-37. Mature readers. 224pg b&w $15.95

Star Wars Tales Vol 5 (various) Stories featuring Boba Fett, Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, Darth Maul, and much more! Collecting issues #17-20 of the quarterly Star Wars Tales title. 248pg $19.95

Super Manga Blast! 49 (various) Romance leads to tearful drama in *Club 9*, as our confused heroine, Harou, finds herself in another very uncomfortable situation with another handsome suitor! Mature readers. . b&w 128pg ... $5.99

Usagi Yojimbo 81 (Stan Sakai) Tomoe is on a hunting excursion with Lord Noriyuki when she stumbles into a battle – a battle fought fifty years ago, wherein her clan was decidedly beaten. b&w 24pg $2.99

DC Comics

Adam Strange 5 (of 8; Andy Diggle & Pascal Ferry) What does the fate of Rann have to do with a prophecy of universal armageddon? In order to uncover the answers, Adam and The Omega Men must confront the ruthless interstellar law enforcement agency L.E.G.I.O.N.! $2.95

Batgirl 60 (Andersen Gabrych & Alé Garza + Jesse Delperdang) With the Penguin looming large in the city once protected by Nightwing, can Batgirl keep the streets safe, or will she face something more sinister and foul than ever before? $2.50

Batman 636 *(Under the Hood* 2 of 4; Judd Winick & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The Black Mask and the new Red Hood carve up the Gotham underworld – and Batman continues to reel from a startling revelation. . $2.25

Cartoon Network Block Party 5 (various) Outer-space meatballs, parachuting grannies, and a bumper crop of robotic hands – this is a job for The Kids Next Door, Johnny Bravo, and more of your favourites. $2.25

Doom Patrol 8 (John Byrne & Byrne + Doug Hazlewood) When J'onn J'onzz responds to a call for help, he goes ape on the Doom Patrol – literally – as they frantically continue their fight against the malevolant Devolutionists! $2.50

The Flash 218 (Geoff Johns & Peter Snejbjerg) Find out what drove Heat Wave to a life of fire and crime, and what's drawing him back in. $2.25

Green Lantern: Rebirth 4 (of 6; Geoff Johns & Ethan Van Sciver) Things continue to twist and turn for John Stewart, Guy Gardner and Kilowog as they come face-to-face with their greatest enemy – the man who destroyed the Green Lanterns. .. $2.95

Hellblazer 204 *(Reasons to be Cheerful* 3 of 4; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco) John Constantine's demonic offspring – Adam, Maria and Saul – continue their vicious onslaught on those closest to the Hellblazer. Mature readers. $2.75

JSA: Strange Adventures 6 (of 6; Kevin J. Anderson & Barry Kitson + Gary Erskine) The golden age JSA heroes take on Lord Dynamo and his hordes of mechanical minions within the concrete canyons of New York. 40pg $3.50

The Legion of Super-Heroes 2 (Mark Waid & Barry Kitson + Mick Gray) As the Legion faces pressure from the newly formed United Planets to play ball with the system, the team finds it's not easy to work with the law and fight it at the same time. 40pg $2.95

The Losers 20 (Andy Diggle & Ben Oliver) The Losers have been on the run long enough – it's time to take the fight to the enemy. Mature readers. $2.95

Metal Hurlant 15 (various) A timely story dealing with the conflict in the Middle East, plus more wild wrestling action in *Lucha Libre*. Mature readers. 64pg $3.95

ONE SHOT Mighty Love (Howard Chaykin; graphic novel) By day, they're courtroom enemies, but by night, Delaney Pope and Lincoln Reinhardt meet as costumed heroes. Can they find love despite their differences? Mature readers. 96pg $17.95

Nightwing 102 *(Nightwing Year One* 2 of 6; Chuck Dixon & various) After being fired by Batman, the former Robin seeks direction and understanding under the bright lights of Metropolis. ... $2.25

Outsiders 20 (Judd Winick & Karl Kerschl) Shift and Indy have a sweet date that ends with some hot action, but not the kind they may have been hoping for! Instead, they find a massive virus has seized the Outsiders HQ's computer systems. $2.50

Planetary 22 (Warren Ellis & John Cassaday) William Leather, a founding member of the 4, is now in the hands of Elijah Snow. He recounts the history of his family, and we learn that his father had secrets that, once revealed, will open doors – and lead to many more questions. $2.95

The Razor's Edge: Warblade 4 (John Ridley & Simon Bisley) Reno Bryce has lost nearly everything – his powers, his lady, even his hands. Now it's time for a little payback! Mature readers. $2.95

Richard Dragon 9 (Chuck Dixon & Zach Howard + Andy Owens) The murderous druglord Soldado was just the tip of the iceberg – someone much bigger and badder is after Richard Dragon! $2.50

one-shot **Seaguy** (Grant Morrison & Cameron Stewart; tpbk) Collects the three-issue miniseries following the strange adventure of would-be hero Seaguy and his faithful companion Chubby Da Choona as they try and decipher the mystery of Xoo – a new food that seems to have evolved into a brand-new conscious lifeform! Mature readers. 104pg $9.95

one-shot **Sinister Dexter: Murder 101** (Dan Abnett & Simon Davis + various) Finnigan Sinister and Ramone Dexter are hired killers with chalk outlines round their souls. Now, their new boss gives them a surprising first job: teaching her younger sister to be a gunshark! Mature readers 160pg $19.95

Sleeper Season Two 8 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips) Miss Misery is the one person on Holden's side, or so he thinks. So what does she do when she's on her own, and who is it that's shadowing her? $2.95

Superman 213 (Brian Azzarello & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) After becoming a victim of the Vanishings, Superman now comes face-to-face with the person – or persons – responsible for the disappearances of millions of Earth's citizens. $2.50

Teen Titans Go! 15 (J. Torres & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) Introducing Kwiz Kid, who tries to stump Robin with brain teasers and booby-traps to impress his ex-girlfriend, Kitten. $2.25

The Witching 8 (Jonathan Vankin & Leigh Gallagher & Dan Green) Elsa tries teaching Sook the ways of magic, but finds herself distracted by the attractive squatter in her family home – which leaves Sook to discover the terrifying secret in the basement. Mature. $2.95

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 516 *(Skin Deep* 2 of 4; J. Michael Straczynski) Peter must confront a foe who, like himself was given amazing powers during a science experiment gone awry. $2.25

Amazing Spider-Man Vol 8: Sins Past (J. Michael Straczynski; tpbk) The worst defeat that Peter Parker ever endured was supposed to be far in his past. Collects Amazing Spider-Man #509-514. 144pg $12.99

Astonishing X-Men 9 *(Dangerous* 4 of 6; Joss Whedon) Things heat up in a

way none of the X-Men ever dreamed...will teamwork save the day when they can't even depend on themselves? $2.99

one-shot **Avengers Disassembled** (Brian Michael Bendis; tpbk) It's the worst day in team history, as Earth's Mightiest Heroes try to deal with the shocking tragedy around them. Collects Avengers #500-503 and the Avengers Finale. 192pg $17.99

Avengers: Earth's Mightiest 6 (of 8; Joe Casey) One member of the Avengers is obsessed with revenge. Another is critically wounded in battle. Still another is on his way out the door! And exactly how is Jarvis laying the groundwork for the future of the superhero team? $3.50

Black Widow 5 (of 6; Richard K. Morgan & Goran Parlov + Bill Sienkiewicz) Armed with the shocking revelations about her Red Room past, Natasha leaves Moscow and heads to the birthplace of the Black Widow programme. $2.99

Captain America 3 (Ed Brubaker) Pursuing the Red Skull's mysterious trail brings Cap and S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Sharon Carter into a brutal crossfire between warring factions of A.I.M. $2.99

Combat Zone: True Tales of GIs in Iraq 2 (of 5; Karl Zinsmeister & Dan Jurgens) Spend a tense night with Cavalry troopers assigned to guard a secret command post just outside an Iraqi city they have been ordered to liberate. $2.99

Excalibur 9 (Chris Claremont) Magneto has returned to Genosha, and he's got someone with him who promises to shake things up for Professor X and his ragtag team! $2.99

Fantastic Four 522 (Mark Waid) The re-introduction of a Marvel Universe hero into the battle may have caused more problems than it solved, because not even he can save the Fantastic Three from the cosmic might of Galactus's new herald-Johnny Storm, the Invisible Man! $2.99

Iron Man 3 (of 6; Warren Ellis & Adi Granov) A living pestilence has been loosed upon mankind in the form of a biologically enhanced terrorist – the product of cutting edge technology released from the Pandora's box of scientific enquiry! $2.99

one-shot **Loki** (Rob Rodi; hbk) Loki's insatiable lust for power, his conflicted sentiments toward Sif, his antipathy toward Balder, and his deep-seated feelings of longing and resentment toward his older brother, Thor, and uncaring father, Odin, will take on new meaning. Collects Loki #1-4. 104pg $17.99

Marvel Age Emma Frost Vol 2: Mind Games Digest (Karl Bollers & Carlo Pagulayan) Finally free from her overbearing father, Emma Frost is on her own. She's found love-but she's also found trouble, as her new boyfriend is in deep with the Boston mob! Collects Emma Frost #7-12. 144pg $7.99

new **Marvel Age Hulk Vol 1: Incredible Digest** (Mike Raicht & various) When Bruce Banner loses control, he becomes a very different man. Collects Marvel Age Hulk #1-4. 96pg $5.99

one-shot **Marvel Visionaries: Stan Lee** (Stan Lee & various) Comics = Stan Lee. This volume includes *Captain America Foils the Traitor's Revenge*, Captain America Comics #3, *The Red Skull's Deadly Revenge*, Captain America Comics #16 and, well, just way too much to even list. 336pg $29.99

Mystique 23 (*Quiet* 4 of 5; Sean McKeever & Manuel Garcia) Choosing to take on Professor Xavier may not have been a wise choice for Mystique, especially since the X-Men are now coming after her with all chambers loaded! $2.99

New Avengers 3 (of 5; Brian Michael Bendis) Fate has brought them together and now Captain America wants to make it permanent! Who will take his hand and join the new Avengers? $2.25

Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: The Women of Marvel 2005 (various) Includes in-depth bios on more than 40 of the most powerful women warriors – from Araña to Vindicator! 48pg $3.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 24 (*Sins Remembered* 2 of 4; Sara Barnes & Scot Eaton) Spider-Man and Sarah, the daughter of Gwen Stacy and the web-slinger's greatest enemy, embark on a journey of discovery-one that will take them halfway around the world to Paris, and into the sights of a mysterious new enemy! $2.25

Ultimate Fantastic Four 15 (Warren Ellis) The FF are in the N-Zone, the universe under ours...a vast, empty expanse. But if it's empty, what are those lights in the distance? $2.25

Ultimate Secret 2 (of 4; Warren Ellis) Mahr Vehl is in S.H.I.E.L.D. custody and we begin to see the outlines of what his race – the star-spanning Kree – have planned for our planet. $2.99

X-23 #2 (of 6; Craig Kyle & Christopher Yost) The full story behind the origin of X-23 – who she is, where she came from, and the exact nature of her relationship to Wolverine. $2.99

one-shot **X-Men: Phoenix – Endsong** 2 (of 5; Greg Pak) What will happen when the Phoenix returns to Earth in search of the one mortal who could ever contain its power only to find her dead? ... $2.99

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

JANUARY

Aardvark Vanaheim

Following Cerebus 3 (various) Features Dave Sim's interviews with Harvey Kurtzman, Joe Bob Briggs and others on copyright law. A cracking read... 40pg b&w $3.95

Abstract Studios

Strangers in Paradise Vol 4 (Terry Moore) Katchoo loves Francine, but her wild past and dangerous enemies prove more than Francine can handle. 360pg b&w $17.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Cocopiazo 2 (Daniel Warner) This issue is packed from pillar to post with strippers. Cleverly-devised storytelling from Warner. 24pg b&w $2.95

Next Exit 2 (Christy Lijewski) Markesh and Retrab have just started their journey but their first step could be their last as they stumble upon a town terrorised by a serial killer who specialises in stealing heads. 24pg b&w $2.95

one-shot **Outlook Grim Vol 1: Dead Nasties** (Black Olive; tpbk) Collects the first six issues of the series. With ouijah boards, voodoo dols, zombies, psychic gypsies and deviant neighbours, this is a paranormal smorgasbord of quick wit, sarcasm and silliness. Mature readers. 160pg b&w $12.95

Patty Cake and Friends Vol 2 #13 (Scott Roberts) Journey 12 years into the future to see what Patty Cake and he. neighbourhood kids are like on the cusp of adulthood. 48pg b&w $4.95

Seamonsters & Superheroes 8 (Scott Mills) Includes chapter 1one of the five-part story *The Infinity Helmet* and the first chapter of the prose sci-fi novel *Elder World*. 24pg b&w $2.95

Antarctic Press

one-shot **The Courageous Princess** (Rod Espinosa; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below*

Gold Digger Vol 4 (Fred Perry; tpbk) Gina and Brittany investigate an ancient alien city-ship in Antarctica and tangle with cosmic canine Dog Supreme. 136pg b&w $9.99

Gold Digger 60 (Fred Perry) Gor and Luan reach the final test of the Proving Grounds – a spiritual realm open only to the worthy. $2.99

Heaven Sent 7 (Ben Dunn) Kyle's journey into the depths of Hell reveals much more than he anticipated. He begins to understand the intertwined nature of Good, Evil and Mankind. b&w $2.99

new **How to Draw Manga: The Next Generation** 1 (various) Title focusing on how to get that Japanesey artistry following from your pen, only this time, it's looking at the nu-skool. $4.95

I Hunt Monsters Vol 2 #1 (Rod Espinosa) Will Warlock is dying for date-time with Tayesha, his college classmate and one of the three fine femmes on his team. b&w $2.99

Mangazine 62 (various) Long-running compilation of US-originated manga, including *Ninja High School*, *Families of Altered Wars*, *Gold Digger* and more. 150pg $9.99

Ninja High School 124 (Robby Bevard & Katie Bair) As Yumei, Yoji and Michael finally reach the Fox Spirit Temple, Yoji is becoming weaker by the hour and Lokki's medicine is no longer helping. b&w $2.99

Panzer: 1946 #4 (Ted Nomura & various) The Japanese ship a Tiger-II tank to their shores and are ready and waiting for the American invasion. 48pg b&w $5.95

Shoujo Vol 2 (various) Showcasing the latest manga talent, including Katie Bair's sci-fi graphic novel *Oasis Destiny*. 120pg b&w $9.99

Archie Comics

Betty 144 (various) A blizzard has Betty bored to tears, but her sister Polly comes to the rescue with girly games galore! It isn't long before their mother joins in, too! $2.19

Betty & Veronica 206 (various) Veronica convinces Betty that the best way to stop being a doormat is to start saying no. $2.19

Jughead 163 (various) Jughead's Mom has baked a pie for the charity bake sale, and she wants Jughead to guard it while she visits his aunt. $2.19

Sabrina the Teenage Witch 64 (various) With Valentine's Day fast approaching, the love triangles are as tangled as ever: Harvey is having a hard time making his feelings known to Sabrina despite Shinji's coaching; while Shinji is questioning his own feelings toward Sabrina despite his involvement with Llandra. $2.19

Sonic the Hedgehog 145 (various) Shadow continues watching over young Hope Kintobor, who he believes is the missing piece to discovering his history. $2.19

Avatar Press

Alan Moore's Hypothetical Lizard 2 (Alan Moore & Sebastian Fiumara) Rawra Chin has returned to the House Without Clocks, giving up his glittering stage career for the love of his ex-boyfriend Foral Yatt. But it's been five years since Rawra left does Foral even want love any more? b&w $3.50

Brian Pulido's Belladonna 5 (of 5; Brian Pulido & Clint Hilinski) The vikings have amassed a huge army and now plain to finish off Belladonna where it all started, her family castle. But she has been preparing for this moment, and now is ready to lay waste to thier hords once and for all! $3.99

Brian Pulido's Unholy 2 (of 3; Brian Pulido & Di Amorim) Penny is starting to learn her new powers, as well as the weaknesses of her enemies. b&w $3.50

Garth Ennis' 303 #4 (of 6; Garth Ennis & Jacen Burrows) The action switches to America, and the bleak deserts of the West, where a burned-out, small-town Sheriff must come to grips with the gruesome slaughterhouse that blights his town, and the misery that has befallen his own life. $3.99

one-shot **Robocop: Wild Child** 1 (Steven Grant & Carlos Ferreira) A badass young woman, who calls herself Heaven, and her gang swing into Detroit to take advantage of the general lack of authority. 16pg $2.99

Threshold 53 (Jeremy Rock, Rafa Lopez) In *Lookers* the zombie invasion has got out of control and the only hope of stopping it is by having Pandora take out Mizery and the dreaded sword Dispair. 48pg b&w $4.99

Bongo Comics

Simpsons Classics 3 (various) The story of how one destructive mouse and one demolishing cat and one demolishing cat are set free from their cartoon world, and how they trigger a nuclear catastrophe. $2.99

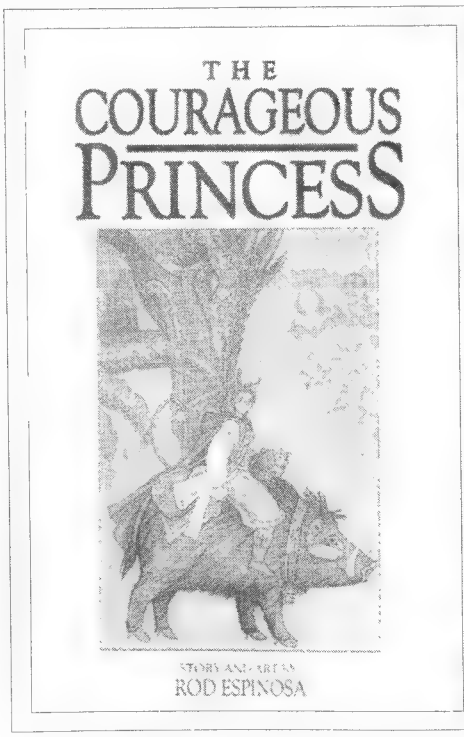
Simpsons Comics 102 (Boothby & Delaney) Mr Burns takes the Simpsons along on his annual summer treasure hunt, but the South Seas adventure soon becomes a matter of life and death for everyone. $2.99

Simpsons/Futurama Crossover Crisis Part 2 #1 (boothby & Lloyd) With the brittle fabric between reality and fiction stretch to it limits, the citizens of Spirngfield find themselves trapped in New New York 1,000 years in the future. $2.99

Claypool Comics

Elvira 141 (Fred Strom) A demon attempts to steal Elvira's past, in a story featuring Elvira's complete history. b&w $2.50

Soulsearchers 70 (Peter David & John Heebink + Al Milgrom) Young witch Kelly goes undercover at the Woodstarke Bank and learns that they know more about the Soulsearchers thanshe knows herself. b&w $2.50



close-up

The Courageous Princess

Antarctic Press

Writer/Artist: Rod Espinosa

Contains all the exploits of Princess Mabelrose, the royal who has to save herself from the dragon, and her companion Spiky the talking porcupine. Described as high adventure with great emotion and warm humour, and nominated for Eisner and Ignatz awards 240pg $15.95

ON SALE JANUARY

Drawn & Quarterly

Berlin 11 (Jason Lutes) While Kurt Severing is away in Leipzig, reporting on the charge of treason brought against his editor, Marthe is introduced to the decadent nightlife of Berlin's leisure class. Mature readers. b&w $3.95

PS238 #10 (Aaron Williams) Herschel's shop class takes an odd turn as its star student, Angela, decides to show off her home-made space station. b&w $2.99

one-shot **Stacks** (Marc Bell; graphic novel) Reworking of Bell's breakthrough material, including collages, paintings, papier-mache dolls and curly drawings. Mature readers. 80pg $9.95

Dreamwave

new **Darkminds: Macropolis** Vol 1 (Chris Sarracini & Jo Chen + Christina Chen) A sadistic serial killer is on the loose and it's up to Agents Nagawa and Nakiko to find him before he kills again. Mature readers. 112pg b&w $7.95

Killzone 3 (John Ney Rieber & Anderson Garcia) Can anyone survive the Killzone? With the Helghast onslaught ripping through his friends, Rico is forced to make a weighty decision: retreat with the few men left alive or make a last stand against the unstoppable Helghast Elite! $2.99

new **Transformers Beast Wars** 1 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & Don Figueroa) This Transformers tale goes beyond the show to reveal what really happened to the Maximals and Predacons after the Beast Wars. $2.99

Transformers Energon 31 (Simon Furman & Alex Milne) Just who is (or rather, was) Alpha Quintesson, and what are his true plans for Cybertron, Earth... and Unicron? $2.99

Transformers/G.I. Joe: Divided Front 4 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & Pat Lee) The G.I. Joes and their Autobot allies try to reconcile their opposing views and unite against Cobra, but can they? $2.99

Transformers Generation One 13 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & Don Figueroa) Created by the sinister Unicron, the lone Cyclonus has been dispatched to search the galaxy for the missing Alpha herald, Scoruge. $2.99

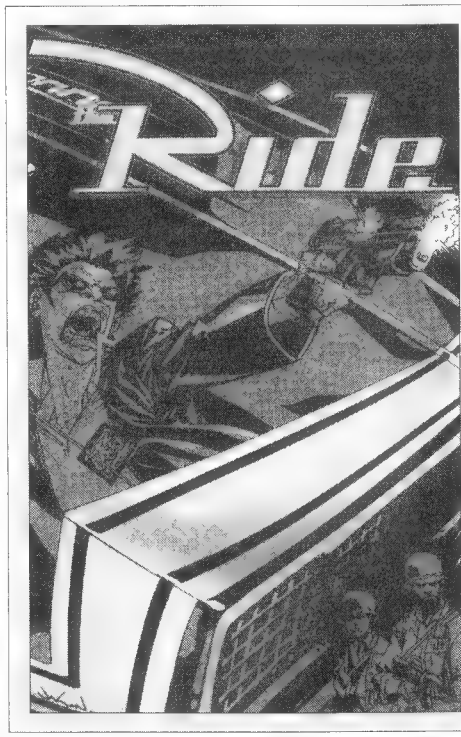
Transformers War Within Vol 3 *(The Age of Wrath* 5; Simon Furman & Joe Ng) Blaster's desperate bid to free the enslaved Autobots lies in ruins, his and his entire team's lives Megatron's to take at will. $2.99

new **Warlands** Vol 1 (Adrian Tsang & Pat Lee) Obsessed with the conquest of the entire realm, Malagen the Black Kahn of Datara, embarks on an unholy quest to obtain the legendary Darklyte armour, an artifact fabled to be the nexus of all manner of magical energy. 112pg $9.95

new **Warlands: Malagen's Campaign** 1 (Ernst Dabel & Edu Francisco) The cunning Malagen has already brought The West to its knees, and now looks to bring a brutal war to the Eastern Realms of Warlands. $2.99

El Capitan

NEW Amy Racecar Vol 1 (David Lapham) Collects both of the Amy Racecar specials along with her appearances in Stray Bullets #6, #10 and #18. Find out how many times she can blow up the planet... 160g b&w . $19.95



close-up

The Ride: Foreign Parts

Image Comics

Writers/Artists: various

Hop in the passenger seat and buckle up for a look at a 1968 Camaro and the lives it alters. Each story focuses on a character whose life is dramatically affected by a situation involving the vehicle. A GI dreams of getting back to the States to buy the one thing he most desires: The Ride. Of course, war is hell, as an innocent kid and one heroic soldier are about to discover. b&w $2.95

ON SALE JANUARY

Fantagraphics

Black Hole 12 (of 12; Charles Burns) Still on the run, Keith remains optimistic about life with Eliza despite the challenges of maintaining his own reality. Mature readers. 48pg b&w $4.95

one-shot **Epileptic** (David B; graphic novel) David B's story of his brother's life with epilepsy, which turns into a penetrating and lacerating self-examination on the author's part. 368pg b&w $24.95

Image Comics

The Amazing Joy Buzzards 2 (Mark Smith & Dan Hipp) The team joins up with the Professor's daughter to explore the Ancient and mysterious Temple of Maru! What ancient evils does this temple of horror contain? b&w .. $2.95

Battle Hymn 2 (of 5; B. Clay Moore & Jeremy Haun + Ande Parks) The group makes its debut before the media, and a new (and not so welcome) member immediately appears. $2.95

Battle of the Planets: Princess 4 (of 6; David Wohl; *Top Cow)* With her career as a member of G-Force behind her, Princess begins to try and see what life as a normal teenager is like. b&w 24pg $2.99

new **Beyond Avalon** 1 (Joe Pruett & Goran Sudzuka) When her father disappears, Megan decides to follow him. Her escape is presented to her in the form of the mists that surround the island, mists that are gateways to other worlds and dimensions. $2.95

Burglar Bill 2 (of 6; Paul Grist) After a violent confrontation followed by a night in the local police cells, Burglar Bill is looking to lay low and keep out of trouble. b&w 40pg $2.95

Cholly and Flytrap 3 (of 4; Arthur Suydam) Manglebaum and Frank square off in the mine, with Lilly's life at stake. As Frank reconstructs the past, he realises that the mining disaster that turned him into a vigilante was just the beginning. 48pg $4.95

Darkness 19 *(Hell House* 3 of 4; David Lapham; *Top Cow)* Darkness-bearer Jackie Estacado is hiding out from rival mobsters in an Atlantic City casino gone horribly, horribly wrong. $2.99

The Darkness: Original Sins Vol 3 (Malachy Coney & Joe Benitez; *Top Cow)* Collects issues #15-22, including the first appearance of the Magdalena and the Spear of Destiny! 208pg $24.95

Darkness/Superman 2 (of 2; Ron Marz & Tyler Kirkham + Matt Banning; *Top Cow)* As Lois Lane's life hangs in the balance, Jackie makes Superman an offer he can't refuse. Can the Man of Steel compromise his principles to save Lois? $2.99

Forsaken 6 (Carmen Treffiletti & Kristian Donaldson + Nick Zagami) Hopelessness shrouds the team as the Separatist discloses the final stage of his plan. $2.95

one-shot **Four-Letter Worlds** (various; graphic novel) Love. Hate. Fear. Fate. Four-Letter Worlds examines how these four little words define our individual worlds in very big ways. b&w 144pg $12.95

new **Freedom Force** 1 (of 6; Eric Dieter & Tom Scioli) Arriving on Earth in the year 1962, the mysterious Mentor enlists the aid of the patriotic Minuteman, the fiery El Diablo and the melancholy Man-Bot to hunt down the soviet super-spy, Nuclear Winter. $2.95

Humankind 5 *(All Roads Lead to (New) Rome* 5 of 5; Tony Daniel & Daniel + Kevin Conrad; *Top Cow)* Bruno is an unwilling Trojan Horse, carrier of a virus from planet Thera that could wipe out the entire population of Earth! $2.99

Invincible Vol 4: Head of the Class (Robert Kirkman & Cory Walker + Ryan Ottley) After the traumatic events of Volume 3: Perfec Strangers, Mark Grayson is left to pick up the pieces and try to continue on with some sort of life. Collects Invincible #14-19. 168pg $14.95

new **Lions, Tigers & Bears** 1 (of 4; Mike Bullock & Jack Lawrence) Joey's world is turned upside down when his mother accepts a job in a neighbouring town, forcing him to move away from his friends and his loving Grandmother. $2.95

one-shot **Negative Burn: The Very Best From 1993-1998** (various; tpbk) When your life is filled with super-villains, aliens, demons and the media, just what is a normal day? 200pg b&w .. $19.95

new **Pigtale** 1 (Ovi Nedelcu) After being rejected time after time from every private investigation office in Portland, Boston Booth finally gets an interview. Will he get his big break? b&w $2.95

PvP 14 (Scott Kurtz) It's comicbook madness when the PvP gang sets up a booth at their first Comicon. Francis wants to enter the costume contest, Brent wants to leave and Jade wants to complete her Archie collection. b&w $2.95

one-shot **The Ride: Foreign Parts** (various; graphic novel) *See Close-Up, above.*

Rising Stars 24 *(Phoenix in Ascension* 3 of 3; J. Michael Straczynski & Straczynski + Brent Anderson; *Top Cow)* Poet, the last of the remaining superpowered Specials, makes the ultimate sacrifice. 40pg $3.99

Savage Dragon 122 (Erik Larsen) A renegade scientist, whose family was slain by American bombs, unleashes the most indestructible juggernaut of all – and its out to destroy America and take down the President the United States! $2.95

new **The Seventh Shrine** 1 (Robert Silverberg & Anders Finer) A grisly murder at the scene of an archaeological excavation has brought the Pontifex Valentine to the ruins of the ancient Shapeshifter city of Velalisier to investigate. 56pg $5.95

one-shot **The Silence** (Bruce Mutard; graphic novel) What is art? This question faces Choosy McBride, a gallery manager, and her partner Dmitri, a painter, when they visit remote Northern Queensland to find a mysterious, anonymous artist whose work possesses a power neither has seen before 112pg $9.95

one-shot **Small Gods, Vol 1: Killing Grin** (Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) Killing Grin tells the story of the terrible decision he faces when a secret he's kept for years – a secret that could send not only him, but many of his friends to prison – falls into the hands of an opportunistic criminal. Collects Small Gods #1-4. 128pg b&w $9.95

Tomb Raider 50 (Dan Slott & Francis Manapul; *Top Cow)* We go 500 years into the future where a band of hi-tech thieves are breaking into the secret chambers below Croft Manor – to raid Lara's Tomb! 40pg $3.99

one-shot **Two Bits** 1 (Mike S. Miller & Miller + Hector Sevilla) Meet Jim Hawkins, Alice (From Wonderland), Pinocchio, Little Red Riding Hood and the Pied Piper as they join forces to stop a dark magic that has been warping this wonderful world into its own image. b&w $0.25

Ultra 6 (of 8; Jonathan Luna + Joshua Luna & Jonathan Luna) It's a bad day to be good guy. $2.95

Victory Vol 2 #4 (of 4; Robert Marcelo Cassaro & Petra Leao + Edu Francisco) While monsters roam the earth attacking innocent people, Victoria and the others fight for their lives within the book of Tome. Now Victoria is faced with the choice of destroying her only means of returning home or letting her former love have his sweet revenge. $2.95

The Walking Dead 15 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) Rick Grimes is on a mission. He's got a long road ahead of him and many obstacles in his way, but he's determined. There's a lot resting on his shoulders. He cannot fail He must not fail. Mature. b&w .. $2.95

Moonstone

one-shot **Kolchak the Night Stalker: Eve of Terror** (Stephen Lord + Michael Kozoll & Walter Figueroa + Chad Hunt) Carl Kolchak is on the story of a scientist who is mysteriously murdered. With his patented skills as a world class snoop, he discovers that the laboratory, and the shadowy figures that fund its experiments, have much to hide. 48pg $5.95

new **G.R.A.V.E. Grrrls: Destroyers of the Dead** 1 (Scott Licina & Ken Wolak) Something is bringing the dead back to life with an insatiable hunger for human flesh, and it's going to take three enhanced female government ops to solve the mystery and put the dead back to bed. Mature. $3.50

one-shot **Moonstone Monsters: Zombies** (various) A New Orleans stage singer is mysteriously murdered, and her brother hires some rather unusua help to find the killer. b&w $2.95

one-shot **Jack Hagee, Private Eye** (CJ Henderson & Doug Klauba + Tom Gianni; tpbk) Ex-military Intelligence, former police detective, and the last honest man in New York City: Jack Hagee is bad news for the bad guys. 96pg b&w $9.49

Oni Press

one-shot **F-Stop** (Antony Johnston & Matthew Loux, graphic novel) *See Close-Up on following page.*

one-shot **Follow Me Closely** (Daniel Krall) Julian's got a huge trust fund waiting around the corner, and he can do whatever he wants with his future. So why choose to run away with his new stepmother? $9.95

Penny Farthing

Captain Gravity and the Power of Vril 2 (various) Hollywood starlet Charles Dubois is off to Egypt with her boyfriend for an archaeological dig that has caught the attention of the US and UK governments. $2.95

Sirius

Dogwitch 15 (Daniel Schaffer) Take a peaked at the twisted origin of Violet

Grimm, courtesy of Moko the Goblin Clown and his Toxic Spring of Illumination Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

Tokyopop

new **Dears** Vol 1 (Peach-Pit; graphic novel) Aliens have landed on Earth and are now a normal part of society. These beautiful beings have been given the name 'Dears' and are trusted and welcomed by most humans. 192pg b&w $9.99

Ai Yori Aoshi Vol 7 (Kou Fumizuki; graphic novel) As the women search for the ultimate itsy bitsy bikini, and Mayu and Tina are at it again, competing for Kaoru's attention. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

B'tx Vol 7 (Masami Kurumada; graphic novel) As the travelling trio of Hokuto, Teppei and Foh come face-to-face with the army of Quatro, Foh orders his companions to the next point while he deals with this current opponent. 192pg b&w $9.99

Boys Be Vol 2 (Itabashi Masahiro & Tamakoshi Hiroyuki; graphic novel) Valentine's Day is approaching and the competition to give and get chocolates is causing a frenzy! Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Chronicles of the Cursed Sword Vol 10 (Park Hui-Jin & Yeo Beop-Ryong; graphic novel) As the well-preserved sage Louen enters Rey's mind, she not only discovers the PaSa sword hidden deep within the recesses of his brain, but an even greater secret that Rey himself did not know. 176pg b&w $9.99

one-shot **Clamp North Side** (Clamp; hbk) North Side looks at Clamp's illustrious career in manga. It features art from beloved series such as Clover, Magic Knight Rayearth, Legend of Chun Hyang, Clamp in Wonderland, and many others. Mature readers. 176pg $29.99

one-shot **Clamp South Side** (Clamp; hbk) South Side features art from beloved series such as Man of Many Faces, Duklyon: Clamp School Defenders, Clamp School Detectives, Suki, Wish, CLAMP School Paranormal Investigators and Miyuki-chan in Wonderland. Mature. 208pg $29.99

Crazy Love Story Vol 2 (Lee Vin; graphic novel) Sung Moo is a lone wolf who doesn't seem to care about anybody, but he's on the hunt for love and someone to care for him. 192pg b&w $9.99

Cyborg 009 Vol 9 (Shotaro Ishinomori, graphic novel) 009 has double vision when he sees two Helens – although their faces aren't launching a thousand ships, they sink 009 into a ball of confusion. 192pg b&w $9.99

Doll Vol 3 (Mitsukazu Mihara; graphic novel) Shocking tales of life and lust abound as androids known as dolls blur the line between humanity and circuitry. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Dream Saga Vol 3 (Megumi Tachikawa; graphic novel) The quest to save the two worlds turns into a tangled web when Yuuki and her companions discover they need the Shinkakyou to get to the Sun God. 192pg b&w $9.99

Eternity Vol 3 (Park Jin-Ryong & Shin Yong-Gwan; graphic novel) Jojo is back and he's got the heads of the high school gangsta world running for their brown pants! 192pg b&w $9.99

Evil's Return Vol 3 (Hwan Shin & Jong-Kyu Lee; graphic novel) As evil encroaches on Yumi and Tae, they meet up with another defender of good in Mirae, a young exorcist from the Vatican. 192pg b&w $9.99

Faeries' Landing Vol 7 (You Hyun; graphic novel) To the shock of many, Myohyang is alive! Meanwhile, Fanta is preparing for a trip to Sokcho, a beach and mountain resort town, on the invitation by Ms Yun. 192pg b&w $9.99

GTO Vol 22 (Tohru Fujisawa; graphic novel) Onizuka must convince Tokiwa that not all men deserve a beating, something about which Ms Daimon won't be very happy! Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Hyper Police** Vol 1 (Mee; graphic novel) Natsuki is a powerful but clumsy cat-girl who works as a bounty hunter for Police Company. Her job is to track down wanted monsters and solve various cases, while her police partner tries to gobbled her up! Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Hyper Rune Vol 2 (Tamayo Akiyama; graphic novel) The Earth Danger Defense Squad is assembled and leading the team is Rune, the Space Queen. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Lagoon Engine** Vol 1 (Yukiru Sugisaki; graphic novel) Yen and Jin are brothers in elementary school and successors in the Ragun family craft of defeating evil spirits. In this world, the battle with spirits comes down to a game of guessing your opponent's name. Once you know the name you gain control over the fight. 192pg b&w $9.99

Lupin III: World's Most Wanted Vol 3 (Monkey Punch: graphic novel) Now that he's on the lam, the suave Lupin has a thing or two in his arsenal. When he sets his sights on the royal family's jewels, will he be hard – pressed to penetrate the Queen's secret chamber? Mature 192pg b&w .. $9.99

one-shot **Peach Fuzz** (Jared Hodges & Lindsay Cibos; graphic novel) Amanda is a lonely nine-year old girl whose mother agrees to let her have a pet. Amanda chooses a ferret because ferrets aren't ordinary, and neither is she! 160pg b&w $9.99

Pet Shop of Horrors Vol 10 (Matsuri Akino; graphic novel) When Chris leaves Count D's home, will he like what he finds in the outside world? Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **PhD: Phantasy Degree** Vol 1 (Son Hee-Joon; graphic novel) Sang is a fearlessly spunky young girl in search of the Demon School Hades. She convinces a group of misfit monsters to sneak her into a monsters-only class 192pg b&w $9.99

Pita-Ten Vol 7 (Koge Donbo; graphic novel) Grim times await Kotarou, Shia, and Misha as Katorou pays his final respects to his dearly departed grandfather. 192pg b&w $9.99

Priest Vol 14 (Min-Woo Hyung; graphic novel) In his unyielding battle to quench a thirst for vengeance, Ivan Isaac must now do a twisted tango with his most tantalising opponent yet: Zamade, Temozarela's right-hand man. Mature readers 192pg b&w $9.99

Psychic Academy Vol 6 (Katsu Aki; graphic novel) Ai is in for the fight of a lifetime when two specialists from ADC come the Psychic Academy in search of those that possess the aura of light. 192pg b&w $9.99

The Queen's Knight Vol 2 (Kim Kang Won, graphic novel) Now that Yuna is Queen of Phantasma, the dashing knight Rieno doesn't want her to go back to her home 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Soul to Seoul** Vol 1 (Kim Jea-Eun; graphic novel) Kai feels discriminated against by the Korean side of his family because he is not full-blooded Korean; he is half Korean and half Caucasian. 192pg b&w $9.99

Threads of Time Vol 3 (Mi Young Noh; graphic novel) As the Mongolian Army threatens the prestigious Koryo army, Sa-Le-Ta-Yi, prince and general of the Mongolian Army, has given Koryo an ultimatum: Serve under the Mongolian Army or go to war! 192pg b&w $9.99

Tokyo Babylon Vol 5 (Clamp; graphic novel) School can be a brutal place, something Kuniko knows firsthand. Classmates beat her, and her teachers can't seem to protect her. When Subaru offers his help, Kuniko finally finds a friendly face. 192pg b&w $9.99

Tokyo Tribes Vol 3 (Santa Inoue; graphic novel) As the rivalry between Mera and Kai rages on, Kai runs into trouble on the home front – and on the homeboy front. Mature readers. 192pg b&w $9.99

Wild Act Vol 10 (Rie Takada; graphic novel) Ryu and Yuniko's life in La-La Land has been an emotional roller coaster, but nothing can prepare them for a shocking revelation that might separate the two lovebirds forever! 192pg b&w $9.99

INTERNATIONAL

Black Library

one-shot **The Call of Chaos** (Marc Gascoigne & Christian Dunn + various; graphic novel) In the neverending war against the dark hordes of Chaos, the mighty armies of the free people are thown into the cauldron of battle. 208pg b&w £7.99

The Horus Heresy Vol 2: The Visions of Darkness Artbook (various) Packed with illustrations from the Horus Heresy card game. 96pg £15.00

Warhammer Monthly 87 (various) Kal Jericho, the galaxy's most debonaire desperado is back in *Crimson Tide*, while Ephrael Stern fights against the dark forces of Chaos in *Daemonifuge III*. b&w £2.50

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3236-3239 (weekly; various) Classic kids' humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 155 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 101 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3733-3740 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

The Dandy 3266-3269 (weekly; various) Classic kids' humour anthology featuring Desperate Dan, Korky the Cat, and all your favourites. £0.55

Fun-Size Beano 167-168 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Action Man 118 (four-weekly; various) Action Man travels to central Africa on his latest adventure, to investigate some strange drumming noises in the heart of the Moujaff jungle! 36pg £1.75

Astonishing Spider-Man 119 (four-weekly; various) Peter's doting aunt has finally learned that her geeky nephew is Spider-Man. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 48 (four-weekly; various) Continuing The Kang War epic, backed by a reprint from the Avengers archives. 76pg £2.40

Batman: Legends 15 (four-weekly; various) Batman receives a crushing, fatal defeat at the hands of Penguin. 76pg £2.40

Cartoon Network 82 (four-weekly; various) Your fave Cartoon Network characters, including Dexter's Laboratory, Johnny Bravo, Powerpuff Girls and loads more! Plus free gifts, competitions and all the latest toon info. 52pg £1.75

Doctor Who Magazine 351 (four-weekly; Gray & various) Marvel UK's longest running title. Includes articles, interviews and news on the forthcoming BBC series. 52pg £3.40

Essential X-Men 120 (four-weekly; Claremont + Morrison & various) Reprints the adventures of the New X-Men and Team X-Treme, with occasional X-related crossovers. 76pg £2.40

Marvel Rampage 3 (various) Two six-page strips per 44-page issue, starring such delights as Wolverine, the Hulk and the Fantastic Four. 44pg £1.75

Mighty World of Marvel 23 (four-weekly; various) Classic anthology, featuring Miller and Janson's Daredevil, Thomas and Trimpe's Hulk, plus Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD by Steranko. 76pg £2.40

Scooby Doo 20 (four-weekly; various) Regular vanquishing of baddies who "would have done it if it weren't for those pesky kids" guaranteed. Also contains competitions, activities, quizzes and more! 36pg £1.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 111-112 (three-weekly; various) Title for younger readers, with games, posters and an original UK strip featuring classic Spidey villains. 36pg £1.50

Tom & Jerry 83 (four-weekly; various) Comic strip stories featuring probably the world's most well-known cartoon duo, plus free gifts, puzzles, games and posters. 36pg £1.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 37 (four-weekly; Bendis & Hairsine + Miki) A double helping of Ultimate Six, featuring The Ultimates and a clutch of Spidey's deadliest foes. 52pg £1.95

Ultimate X-Men 23 (four-weekly; Millar & Finch) The X-Universe re-imagined – everything you thought you knew about the X-Men is wrong! 52pg £1.95

Wolverine & Deadpool 107 (four-weekly; various) Current and classic solo Wolverine tales, now with added insanity from the Merc With The Mouth. ... £1.95

Rebellion

2000AD #1420-1423 (various) More supernatural investigation in *Caballistics, Inc*, while the Blues enter the Slamball league and pay a hefty price in *Second City Blues*. £1.60

Judge Dredd Megazine 227 (various) Cassandra is back on the slab in a new thriller, *Lock-In*, while camp vamp Devlin Waugh picks up a nasty little something in *Vile Bodies*. 100pg £3.95

Striker 3D

Striker 72-75 (weekly; Pete Nash + various) Football comic starring ex-Sun newspaper Warbury Warriors. Two CGI strips plus reprint of *Billy's Boots*, old Sun *Striker* strips and features. £1.50

close-up

F-Stop

Oni Press

Writer: Anthony Johnson

Artist: Matthew Loux

Nick is a struggling photographer heading down the drain until he spots Chantel, a Latina goddess with a bar tab better suited to a biker club than a stunning beauty. With a little exaggeration from his friends, he's the hottest shutterbug in NYC and the darling of the fashion world. But does Nick have what it takes to live up to his legend? Mature readers. 160pg b&w $14.95

ON SALE JANUARY

True Brits: Taking Pride in the best of British comics

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

THERE'S nothing wrong with a little bit of patriotic pride in our country's past glories in comics, although it seems UK comic fans often take this heritage too much for granted, or undervalue it, even dismiss it, preferring the latest imported comic books or manga.

Sometimes it is left to a few foreign Anglophiles, like DC's Bob Wayne or Dutch Rob Van Bavel, to help us appreciate the treasures under our very noses.

Never underestimate the power of nostalgia, when it comes to those formative experiences of reading your first comics as a kid. I think this accounts for a lot of the buzz surrounding next summer's six-part mini-series **Albion** from WildStorm, a plot by Alan Moore to resuscitate some of the long-lost heroes of IPC boys' weeklies **Lion**, **Buster** and **Valiant**.

It's about time someone got around to rescuing great British eccentrics like *Kelly's Eye* and *Robot Archie*, lost in newsprint limbo for much too long. Goodness know what Americans will make of these bizarre characters, but thousands of guys 30-something and over, in Britain and all around the Commonwealth, had their imaginations permanently warped by them and would thrill to see them in action again.

If the word gets out, could **Albion** tempt this potential audience back to comics? That is what Titan Books is hoping, when they launch a new reprint range next year with collections of **The Steel Claw** and **The Spider**.

So what were your favourites growing up? My Mum and Dad used to buy the weekly **Look & Learn** in the hope that my brother and I would read the educational pages, but for us the main attraction was always *The Trigan Empire*, an incongruous mix of swords and rocket ships, ancient Rome and space opera.

After the late Don Lawrence had spent years painting two colour pages every week of *The Trigan Empire* for a flat fee and no ownership or royalties, he turned his back on exploitive British publishers and found the rewards and recognition he deserved in the Netherlands illustrating the sumptuous SF fantasy **Storm**. Of his 80 or so *Trigan* stories, only the first handful have ever been reprinted here in book form.

But Lawrence built up such a huge following across Europe, centred in The Netherlands, that Rob van Bavel, Dutch organiser of the Don Lawrence Fan Club <www.donlawrence.co.uk>, has launched a complete re-edition of the saga in 12 large-format deluxe hardbacks, two each year, to conclude in 2009.

This sort of quality doesn't come cheap, but the standard of reproduction could not be better, the majority of pages pin-sharp and shot directly from the original artwork. Re-reading these tales, I can't help noticing some glaring inconsistencies and dubious right-wing politics, but they don't take away the warm glow of finding childhood memories again.

Lawrence's admirers can see his original art and a recreation of his studio by visiting the newly opened Dutch comics museum in Gröningen <www.stripmuseumgroningen.nl>.

Another Anglophile is American George Khoury, who has compiled **True Brit**, an overdue celebration from TwoMorrows Publishing of 21 of the UK's greatest comic artists.

While George shrewdly concentrates most of its pages on the more familiar current hotshots drawing for America like Frank Quitely and Bryan Hitch and the first Brit invasion of Brian Bolland, Kevin O'Neill, Dave Gibbons, David Lloyd and others, the interviews do make it clear how all of them have been inspired more or less directly by the massive heritage of British comics.

This is represented by David Roach's concise, precise 30-page British comics history, by tributes to Leo Baxendale, Frank Bellamy, Ron Embleton, Frank Hampson and Ken Reid and short interviews with John Burns, Sydney Jordan, Don Lawrence (sadly, his last) and Mike Noble.

Let down only by a lack of colour (only four glorious pages), **True Brit** crams every page with information and imagery essential to appreciate the unique visions of British artists, past and present. The stellar rollcall of those left out makes me cry out for a second volume, please!

Fortunately a few UK publishers see the value in recovering our classics for the next generation. The solid foundations of Titan Books were always their reprints of the best from **2000 AD**. This year Titan renewed their commitment to the past by releasing handsome hardbacks of Frank Hampson's *Dan Dare*, his utterly convincing vista into the future begun in **The Eagle** in 1950 and light years ahead of anything seen in comics at the time, and of Pat Mills and Joe Colqhoun's *Charley's War* from **Battle**, surely the most moving record on a human scale of the First World War in English-language comics.

Hawk Books' Dan Dare collections are long out of print and now command stratospheric e-Bay prices, so these Titan versions are really welcome and come with extras, including a previously censored Hampson interview disclosing the tragedy of his attempted suicide. With **Modesty Blaise** and **James Bond** available again from Titan, it's surprising how much female flesh gets bared in our newspaper strips.

By the Forties, Norman Pett's **Daily Mirror** heroine *Jane* revealed far more than would ever be allowed in puritan America. *Jane* was censored and cancelled in the US, but over here she became the darling of the Forces.

Artist Pett came to rely on his life-model Chrystabel Leighton-Porter, photographing and sketching her in the nude. Chrystabel went on perform for the troops and public with her faithful dachshund Fritzi, frequently upsetting local authorities with her cheeky revues.

Historian Andy Saunders has thoroughly researched Chrystabel's life, and that of *Jane* and her creator, in **Jane: A Pin Up at War** <www.pen-and-sword.co.uk>, a fascinating 160-page feast of rare art, photos and anecdotes.

But *Jane* was a saint compared to the outrageous *Fat Slags* from **Viz**, whose live-action movie mercifully vanished from our screens in its opening week. It's 25 years since young Chris Donald threw together the first issue in his Newcastle bedroom and in **Rude Kids** (Harper Collins) he pens his candid and very funny 370-page biography and records the insane rise to "fame and fartune" of **Viz**, which peaked at 1.25 million copies. Now semi-retired, Donald works in a second-hand bookshop, which he admits is overrun with old **Viz** annuals they can't sell.

There's more **Viz** visuals, roughs and rarities, in William Cook's silver-plated artbook **25 Years of Viz** (Boxtree). We wouldn't have **Viz** without the great DC Thomsons institutions of **The Beano** and **Dandy** and as a final tip, don't miss this year's **Classic** annual spotlighting the Fifties, when both weeklies could top two million copies, for pages of Davey Law, Leo Baxendale, Dudley Watkins and more in their prime.

Now imagine if Thomsons began complete compilations devoted to each of their much-loved masterpieces – well, I can dream, can't I?!

PG tips

My pick of a few perfect Christmas gift books, for others and for yourself:

DEAD MAN'S SHOES
(Anjan Sarkar;Warp Films)
November 2004.....£12.99
Dead Man's Shoes by Shane Meadows got rave reviews as the best Brit film of the year. It defies genres, reeling from super-natural to working class comedy, from *Death Wish*-style thriller to social realism.

Richard, a highly trained soldier, comes home from the army to protect his slightly retarded brother. Together they set up camp in the hills above their hometown, now ruled by a gang of drug dealers and thugs. Richard's return instils paranoia and terror in the criminals' minds, as they realise his mission is to take violent retribution against them. Starting from his storyboards for Meadows' screenplay, artist Anjan Sarkar has crafted his own interpretation as an 88-page colour graphic novel.

While it differs slightly in places, his spin on the story is equally gripping and stands up in its own right as a bleak tragi-comedy about the love and guilt between brothers and the price of revenge. Ideal for movie and Preacher fans, Anjan's unique re-mix and tie-in will be sold with the DVD but is out now separately. *www.rwarpfilms.com*

STRANGERS IN PRADISE: THE TREASURY EDITION
(Terry Moore; Harper Perennial)
November 2004.....$23.95
Big-time publishers Harper Collins put out this glossy, large format, 240-page compendium to celebrate the 10th anniversary and over one million copies sold of Terry Moore's ever-changing love triangle **Strangers in Paradise**. Moore reveals biographical background on how he got started in newspaper strips and self-publishing, how he found his leading characters Katchoo, Francine and David, and a candid "director's cut" commentary on key scenes.

Extras include sketches, references materials, censored panels and all 20 pages of the scrapped first issue. The perfect treat for all **SiP** fans and a great way for the broader public to discover one of the strongest romantic dramas in comics. *www.harpercollins.com*

MALCOLM MAGIC COLLECTED
(Robin & Lawrence Etherington; Blink Twice Publications)
November 2004.....£10.00
Chatting with artist Lorenzo (Lawrence) at the Bristol Comic Expo, I was quietly stunned and heartened when he told me one of his biggest influences is Roy Wilson. Never heard of him? Wilson was perhaps Britain's most influential children's cartoonist in the '30s and '40s. Los Bros Etherington bring back all his oldtime cheery zaniness and blend it with surreal modern comedy about the weird side-effects of bunny-boy boozer Malcolm after accidentally drinking a bottle of motor oil. Get in the ground floor with this trade of the first three issues, complete with the colour covers and a free sketchbook supplement.
www.malcolmmagic.com

*Titan Books are available at all good comic shops. **Storm**, **Trigan Empire** and **True Brit** are available in the UK from Quality Communications. Phone 01273 566 222 for free ccatalogue*

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. Despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its home of www. comicbook resources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

From Our Embittered Correspondent

WHILE a number of Marvel's previous titles involving war and terrorism have tried to explore issues from different perspectives, reports I've had are this is not the case with **Combat Zone: True Tales from GIs in Iraq**. America is the One True Hope, all who oppose her or disagree with her current thinking are evil scum, and the world would be better off without them. And thank the Lord we have these plucky brave soldiers to do her bidding.

And certainly the resume of Karl Zinsmeister, credited as the "embedded correspondent" writing this with Ron Marz, makes for interesting reading. He's editor-in-chief of the **American Enterprise Magazine** *<http://www.taemag.com>* the in-house magazine of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) *<http://www.aei.org/>*. The AEI is a neo-conservative think tank, with strong ties to the oil industry and the White House, and one of the most important architects of President Bush's current foreign policy *<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html>*. Famous members include Richard Perle, Newt Gingrich, ExxonMobile's CEO Lee Raymond and Vice-President's wife Lynne Cheney.

Also, the AEI gave office space to the "Project for a New American Century", an even more conservative think tank with Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz on its roster. Who better to write a touching, poignant and thruthful version of the current state of affairs in Iraq?

Articles from Mr. Zinsmeister can be seen at *<http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleid.17386/article_detail.asp>*, and *<http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleid.17386/article_detail.asp>* and *<http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleID.18290/article_detail.asp>*

I think I may have something new to take the piss out of next year. Hooray!

Dreams to Dirt

I'm hearing more stories from despairing Dreamwave creators, awaiting on payments, getting partial payments, or getting late payments. They're afraid of saying anything up public, however, in case they'll not get paid at all. But if a favourite Dreamwave book is late, you might not want to only blame the creators.

Liberal Elite

Still obsessing with Mark Alessi? He's just formed a new company, Elite Associates. What it's there for, what it will do and at which point it will start putting up large displays at comic book conventions is as yet unknown.

Currant Affairs

The British sugary blackcurrant drink Ribena launched its special Hallowe'en 'Batcurrant' juice, with packaging by comic artist and designer extraordinaire, Rian Hughes.

And if you bought one of the carton multipacks, you'll have got a little comic strip by Rian and his brother-in-law, **Terra Obscura** writer Pete Hogan – first time they've worked together since *Sam Slade*.

Pity the Fools

AP Comics is creating a **Mr T** comic book.

Recycle Your Comics

I'm told that the Kurk Busiek/Ron Garney story running in **JLA** was originally a "Crime Syndicate" pitch rejected in the nineties.

Glad to see that old "bottom drawer" still in use.

Another Reason to Love The French

I understand that French publisher Soliel has signed

continued on next page...

Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net sightings

Punisher writes

IN AN interview on the Moviezone site, actor Thomas Jane has been talking about the projected *Punisher* sequel, which may go ahead soon.

Until that happens, however, poacher turned gamekeeper Jane reveals he's found a little work on the side: *I'm writing a comic book. I'm actually doing a* ***Punisher*** *four-issue arc for Marvel and then I'm writing my own comic book called* ***Bad Planet****, a sci-fi alien invasion comic.*

I've got introduced to great artists and writers, people that I admired my entire adolescence. It's opened the doors to me creatively in a number of different ways. It's just a great experience all the way around.

I'm a self-professed goober. I've been reading comics since before I could walk so for me, in a lot of ways, it's a dream come true... the Punisher is going to be infiltrating and breaking down a criminal organization that does real bad things. The guy at the centre of it is going to be a family man with a wife and two kids.

So he's going to be confronted with taking out the guy and taking food out of these kids' mouths. Finding that moral justification.

That's where the Punisher fascinated me. It's like OK, you're doing what you're doing and going to kill the bad guys but the bad guys have kids and those kids are going to school and maybe one will be a doctor... you're spreading the disease, man. That's what interests me.

Networks reserves judgement on Jane's writing abilities until the books are unleashed, but it's a refreshing change for a big actor to show some respect for comics as a worthwhile form in themselves, after years of actors and actresses (the likes of Tom Hanks and Halle Berry come to mind) dismissing the source material of their movies as mere pamphlets.

Byrne on Reeve

JOHN Byrne has his own website, complete with its own message-board, on which the man is the absolute ruler. If you don't agree with him, you get booted, it's as simple as that.

Over the last few years, he's managed to offend an enormous amount of people, recently upsetting Neal Adams, Mark Waid and Dave & Patty Cockrum in particular.

He managed to trump himself in the last month though, with the following comment about the late Superman actor Christopher Reeve: *I have noticed that people have begun referring to Christopher Reeve as a "hero". I do not wish to take away one iota of the courage he must have needed not to wake up screaming every single day, but the hard truth is there was nothing "heroic" in what happened to him, or how he dealt with it. In fact, as far as how he dealt with it, he didn't even have a choice. We could imagine he spent every hour of every day (when not in front of the cameras) begging family members to simply kill him and get it over with — but none of them did, so he had no choice but to deal with each day as it came. * Heroism, I believe, involves choice. *Not in any way suggesting this is what was happening, just in case there are those who are paralysed from the neck up who might be reading these words...*

A predictable storm of outrage followed Byrne's somewhat tactless comments, with few even suggesting that more people were reading these comments than were reading his books, but Byrne is unrepentant.

Networks has quite a store of John Byrne comments, more of these bon mots will follow...

Marvel takes on The City

IF YOU'VE ever played online adventure games, you may have come across *City of Heroes*, in which you take the role of a superhero and battle other users across an enormous online world. You can use the game to create any type of character, which has attracted the attention of Marvel, which is suing the manufacturers for unspecified damages.

Their suit alleges that you can use the game to create heroes that are very similar to Marvel's trademarked characters, including a large green, tanker-like character, and a mutant character with claws.

Although the game's servers prevent players from using copyrighted character names, it's possible to get round that by spelling the names slightly differently. The manual even features a comic strip featuring characters with variants of Wolverine's name arguing about who's the real thing.

It's been speculated that Marvel is making a pre-emptive strike in preparation for their own online RPG, having earlier this year forced one company to remove unlicensed Marvel skins from a site supporting the Freedom Force PC game.

However this time it opens up new legal territory, as reported by the Associated Press: *The Marvel lawsuit appears to be the first to raise this question in the scope of an online game. But early copyright infringement lawsuits brought by recording companies against pioneer file-sharing service Napster successfully argued Napster was liable for its customers' sharing of music online because they could do so only by accessing the company's computer system.*

The argument can still be made that *City of Heroes* is only empowering users to the same degree that an establishment like Kinkos enables customers to make paper copies of copyrighted material, said Fred von Lohmann, senior intellectual property attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation. "Is it a violation of copyright to make up a character in the virtual world or is that fair use?" von Lohmann added. "This is really untested ground in the courts."

Networks feels this could prove to be an enormous case in the arena of online freedom, and will report more as it occurs.

Robbin' Banksy

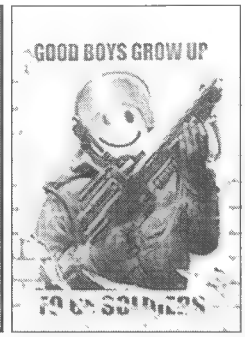
Alex DiCampi and Igor Kordey have a new book coming out from IDW called **Smoke**, the covers of which have borrowed designs from genius graffiti artist Banksy.

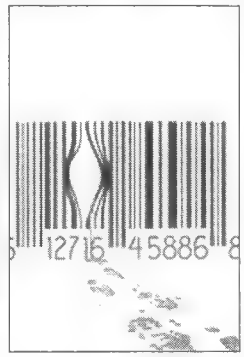
Unfortunately this was noticed by the Wooster collective, an online group of art-dealers and

activists, who considered this use to be theft, and were urging people to write in to the publisher in protest.

DiCampi replied: *We never tried to claim the images were not inspired by Banksy. We were going to credit the images on the cover as "After Banksy", and include a line on the first page of the comic where to go to check out Banksy's art.*

The folks at Wooster say we're stealing, and want us to drop or change the covers. All we wanted to do was share our Banksy love, and do a credited homage. But apparently that's not on. Wooster seem quite determined that our intention was to do Banksy harm, but it most assuredly was not. We've emailed Banksy anyway, to ask his permission, and we'll see what he says.





Above & below: Banksy's classic images, Flying Copper and Barcode. Right: the cover art for IDW's new comic ***Smoke*** *#1 and #3, their unpaid "homages" to Banksy.*

Also, elsewhere on Wooster's site, they have works of art for sale at prices of $300 and up from their collective artists. These artists use well-known photos of Bruce Lee and James Dean, and images from the Spider-Man and Catwoman films. Whereas we changed Banksy's images significantly when we created the covers for ***Smoke*** *#1 and 3 (like I said, we used them for inspiration), the Spider-Man and Catwoman images are not changed in the slightest. They're simply direct copies.*

None of this use is credited, and I somehow don't think they got permission from the copyright holders.

Photographers are artists too, folks. While I appreciate Wooster's efforts on Banksy's behalf, they do come across as a little bit hypocritical.

Fortunately this has all been resolved, as Banksy himself got involved with an email: *alex- everything will be cool if the comic is good. if the comic is bad we fight friday night in the car park of wetherspoons, crouch end 8pm no weapons –b.*

Check out the book, it could be cool... well, it sure sounds like it better be!

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

I'll be the first to admit that I know next to nothing about online comics, so when I decided to feature them in this column, I was very surprised by what I discovered. Surprised not just by the sheer quantity, but also the quality. Along with the vast choice and diversity, this means that I'll look at other standouts over the coming months.

AMERICAN ELF *www.americanelf.com*
Even industry professionals are in on the game of online comics, such as alternative superstar and Eisner, Ignatz, and Harvey Award winner, James Kochalka. There's a new elf-orientated strip each day, but to get to the archives you need to subscribe. At $1.95 per month (about £1.10p) that's not so bad, and the quality is always sky high. **8**

BATMAN: DARK KNIGHT ADVENTURES *http://wf.toonzone.net/DKA*
An original non-profit comic by James McLean and Ian Moore, founded in 2002 as an edgier take on *Batman: The Animated Series*. DKA attracts readers in the thousands, and Mathew Spaull (artist for *Destruction Derby Arenas* video game) is drawing the next cover. It has even received kudos from the likes of John Delaney, Ty Templeton, and Marc Campos. And it doesn't stop there, with behind-the-scenes, archives, contests, plus a perfect opportunity to be discovered: they're looking for a colourist! **9**

DISCOTRONIC FUNK COMMANDOS *http://soulmaninc.freewebspace.com/onlinecomic1.html*
This is written and drawn by Simon Williams, whose pulse-pounding picture graces the front of the 2005 Incredible Hulk Annual. Homages come thick and fast in DFC to Marvel comics, to Jack Kirby, and to disco music. With his clean-cut style, it's often easy to catch Williams as an Alan Davis in-the-making, and this amusing comic – featuring the likes of Randy Hogan, Super Trooper and Afro-Man – shows that he knows how to write a good tale (like Davis does) too! **8**

MAC HALL *www.machall.com*
Mac Hall is best summed up by the creators themselves, "a comic mostly about guys and the dumb stuff guys do". With its sharp scripting by Matt Boyd, and individualistic art by Ian McConville, this slice-of-dorm-life strip would not feel out of place in a number of existing hard copy publications. And for any talent scouts reading this who may be interested, the comic is also full colour and produced on a regular basis. A class act likely to lead to imitators. **8**

MARVEL *www.marvel.com/dotcomics/*
While many use the Net to try to gain a hard copy publishing opportunity, one publisher cannily uses the Net to gain opportunities for its already-existing hard copies. This is Marvel of course, with its free-to-view dotcomics. Not being a *Buffy* or *Angel* follower, I unwisely overlooked Joss Whedon's **Astonishing X-Men** #1. Guess what? It's here, along with **Amazing Fantasy** #15, **Avengers** #500 and many more. A great online offering. **9**

THE REALLY HEAVY GREATCOAT *www.downthetubes.net (Latest at: www.virtual-lancaster.net)*
The Really Heavy Greatcoat by John Freeman and Nick Miller harkens back to the newspaper strips of old, rich on both warmth and character. Where this comes into its own however, is that Freeman's sci-fi sensibilities mix in, thereby giving it a unique, surreal identity. Like Mac Hall, above, this would work well in syndication, something powerhouse cartoonist Michael "The Norm" Jantze has expressed interest in, while a hard copy collection is also being planned. **8**

Honourable mentions:
Powerpuff Girls Doujinshi *[http://bleedman.snafu-comics.com/]* and **Yenny** *[www.yennycomics.com]*

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

Humberto Ramos for two projects, with three books in each project. Ramos will be working with Didier Crisse on the first, and will appear at Angouleme, the world's largest comic book convention, in January to promote it.

Movie Magic

Tomm Coker, artist of **Blood & Water** had to pull off **Blood & Water 2** for a very good reason... he's writing and directing a major horror movie. And he's not the only one; inker Aaron Sowd has just optioned his first movie too.

Titans All

As WildStorm publishes the new **Albion** series, Titan is rushing out reprints of the originals – kicking off with **The Spider!** (Garry Leach cover) with copious notes and essays about the character. It will also include the very first Spider story written by none other than Jerry Siegel. **The Spider!** will be followed by **The Steel Claw**, cover by Brian Bolland.

With November's hardcover of **Charley's War**, it's time for America to be introduced to a nostalgia for something they never knew existed.

Taken for Grant

The London Winterfest convention's star stage interview (to which neither Jonathan Ross or Grant Morrison turned up) was probably just as entertaining as Bob Wayne, Dan DiDio, Frazer Irving and Si Spurrier tried to give answers to Jonathan Ross's videotaped questions for Grant Morrison, both their own answers and what they thought Grant Morrison might say. Until it all got too philosophical, magickal and bollockal.

All pretty entertaining stuff, and the room was in laughter for much of the hour-and-a-half. No one really seems to have minded Grant's absence.

Much is a blur but we did learn that Bob Wayne in his **Timemasters** series from years ago, feels proud of getting the word "shit" into one of his issues by splitting it up over two panels and getting it past the book's editor.

DiDio also let slip one of his favourite lines of dialogue from one of the upcoming **JLA** issues, along the lines of "Alfred, has my flying saucer been delivered from the factory yet?"

And Jonathan Ross has the coolest custom-made toy collection going.

Suicide is Painless

Indeed, the star of the comics show was, for a change, the comics. There was a lot of material making its debut and getting seen by the crowd.

One of the con's highlights in that regard was the debut of **Commercial Suicide** *<www.commercialsuicide.com>*, a professionally produced squarebound oversiezed anthlogy book featuring material so amusing that Gosh Comics in London even refused to stock it. They sold all 100 copies they brought at £5 each.

Other notable books on show were Mark Stafford's **Scenes From Books I Have Not Read** <www.bugpowder.com/stafford/>, **Brodie's Law** <brodieslaw.co.uk>, **Peckham Dreams** <www.astralgipsy.com>, **Flickermaus** <bugpowder.com/andy> and Gary Spencer Millidge also released a prequel to **Strangehaven**, a mini-comic called **Insomnia**. Available from his website <www.millidge.com> for £5, no **Strangehaven** fan should be without it.

Starring Alex, the lead of his ongoing series, Millidge describes the book, "if **Strangehaven** is *The Prisoner* then **Insomnia** is *Danger Man*".

AP Comics again looked very impressive as their library of work grows. And I saw a quote from Miramax I think on the back of a cover for issue 3 of **The Chase** that looked rather telling...

The Boy Done Wrong Again

The **Wolverine** #20 variant editions – one produced for every 65 copies of the regular version – vanished from Diamond's LA warehouses.

Currently valued over $100 each, hundreds simply disappeared and neither Marvel nor Diamond is able to give a satisfactory answer, especially to retailers who upped orders in some cases to get those variant issues.

So, if you do see one for sale in a non-traditional outlet, maybe you should check the cover for marks left by sticky fingers.

Reviews

*Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, **CI**'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), David Knight (DK), Tom McSween (TM), Keiron Mullens (KM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Leonie O'Moore (LO), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

The Goon 9

by Powell

<+> Our anonymous narrator relates how The Goon once rustled together an all-star American Football team bringing hope to his depression-hit town; unfortunately this doesn't escape the notice of the local gangsters. As with recent issues Eric Powell mixes the comic with the tragic, in his inimitable sardonic style. And Eric Wright's Kirby-esque spoof ad reminds you not to take things too seriously. (MAT) 8

DC Comics

Batgirl 57

by Horrocks & Huddleston + Delperdang

<+> The media blames Batman for stirring up gang violence, Onyx takes a beating, and Oracle sends Batgirl to help her out. But the real drama arises from what the Black Mask is up to. He's massing troops against a target in Central Gotham, but is he labouring under a misapprehension? The latest twist makes this sub-plot truly gripping. (DK) 7

Batman 633

by Willingham & Kinsun + various

<=> Batman's scheming comes at a high cost in this fitting and worthy end to a crossover that started poorly and had too many parts but came good in the finish, with highs and lows and outright fillers along the way. Bill Willingham and penciller Kinsun do a bang-up job, and so do the three inkers who worked on this issue. Tony Avina's colouring is none too shabby either. (DK) 7

Batman & Catwoman: Trail of the Gun 2

by Nocenti & van Sciver + Chuckry

<=> Catwoman chases down a gun that fires perfect shots, and uncovers a family tragedy. Writer Ann Nocenti peppers the script with enough personal angles to make me forget the rhetoric that can unbalance her work. By making the politics personal, she makes it entertainment. The book's title remains a misnomer, a move I resent, because Batman appears only briefly in the first and final chapter. Chris Chuckry's colours glare and are somewhat harsh, Ethan van Sciver's art solid but unexceptional and too light - and like the glossy paper at odds with the abrasive story. A good idea that lost something along the way. (IM) 6

Batman: Gotham Knights 58

by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<++> Although this still has everything to do with the *War Games* crossover and nothing to do with Gotham Knights, A. J. Lieberman makes the most of the situation he's been handed to write, which is Tarantula and her gang, Las Arañas, cornered by the GCPD in an empty building. He also tells what happened to Spoiler. Al Barrionuevo and Francis Portella's artwork is superb, as are Brad Anderson's colours. (DK) 7

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 184

by Horrocks & Walker + Nixey

<=> Batman and friends battle an army of crooks under the leadership of the Black Mask in an open-air theatre, in a bizarre free-for-all that has an assortment of Batman villains seemingly popping up out of nowhere and coming and going as they please. Batman is insufficiently contrite, given the extent to which he may be blamed for Gotham City's latest gang war, and displaces anger left, right and centre. (DK) 6

Catwoman 36

by Brubaker & Gulacy + Palmiotti

<=> While Catwoman tussles with the assassin Zeiss down at Gotham's docks, and Batman rescues Tarantula's gang from the police, Oracle is under siege from Gotham's underworld, and must rely on her hideout's automated defences. The story and artwork are fine, but, as has been remarked before, Catwoman's costume giving her the contours of a naked woman is somewhat unrealistic and a cheap sales gimmick. (DK) 7

Ex Machina 5

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm Signiture

<-> While a mystery vandal solves the problem of a controversial artwork, Mayor Hundred has an emotional confrontation with an old friend over the "snow plough murders". Brian K. Vaughan's superhero-in-politics seems like a fine way to explore the responsibilities of real power, but after this first story arc I'm unconvinced that the mixing of these two themes really makes an engaging enough title. Tony Harris's clean, yet realistic linework, aided by J.D. Mettier's toned-down colours and texturing, suitably capture both the heroic and the everyday moments in the plot. (MAT) 7

Fables 30

by Willingham & Buckingham + Leiloha; Vertigo

<=> Snow White drops her litter, while Prince Charming wins the election and finds that fulfilling manifesto policies is harder than making them. Bill Willingham gets this new arc off to a light, almost whimsical start, with Mark Buckingham's pencils showing terrific versatility. I'm surprised the Fabletown mayoral election doesn't more obviously parallel Bush/Kerry (Willingham chooses to discuss presentation rather than party politics) but that neutrality helps maintain the gently comic atmosphere. (IM) 7

Fallen Angel 15

by David & Lopez

<=> Lee, the Fallen Angel, becomes a target of the underworld. While that is a rudimentary summing up of the plot, what I can't do justice to in this review's limited word count, is the rich ambience that creators Peter David and David Lopez instil into this enthralling, mature-reader orientated comic. All the elements to transfer into a movie or TV show. (CEB) 8

Gotham Central 24

by Rucka & Lark + Gaudiano

<=> Montoya tries to force dirty CSU cop Corrigan into producing the missing bullet that will clear her partner. Greg Rucka's script deftly lets us into the souls of the lead detectives, and the darkness that dwells in even a good cop's heart. As usual, however, it's the champion art team of Michael Lark and Stefano Gaudiano that gives this book the push from solid and good to great, their beautifully constructed panels finding so many nuances in the generous scripts. A consistently first-class read. (IM) 8

Hellblazer 201

by Carey, Manco; Vertigo

<-> Mike Carey is one of the greatest short story writers in comics these days. A good short story is the hardest thing to write, and this punchy little tale of the repercussions of robbing Constantine's lock-up is pure Clive Barker *Books of Blood* material. Good solid horror writing. (RN) 8

Human Target 15

by Milligan & Chiang; Vertigo

<-> When assassins come for charismatic cult leader Paul James, a young girl is critically injured in the crossfire. The problem is, it's Christopher Chance impersonating James – and now he needs to save her life. Peter Milligan works through the clichés of the sexual and financial abuse of believers but makes it compelling through Chance's detached cynicism and brings new twists on a very old theme. Cliff Chiang's art delights at showing how things appear to the characters but are completely different to the readers. (IM) 7

Identity Crisis 5

Meltzer & Morales + Bair

<+++> After a bit of a breather in issue 4, Identity Crisis becomes a tense and exciting thriller again, with honest-to-goodness superhero action and touching scenes from the heroes' and villains' private lives. Writer Brad Meltzer skilfully weaves two sub-plots together almost imperceptibly, and creates a nice sense of dread in the lead up to the climax. (DK) 9

Identity Crisis 6

by Meltzer & Morales + Bair

<=> The heroes deal with the fallout from issue #5 in a dramatic and intense aftermath. There are further startling revelations about the knock-on effects of the memory erasure, and there's a shocking discovery resulting from Sue Dibny's autopsy. These are significant events unfolding, skilfully handled by an impressive creative team. (DK) 9

JLA 107

by Busiek & Garney + Green

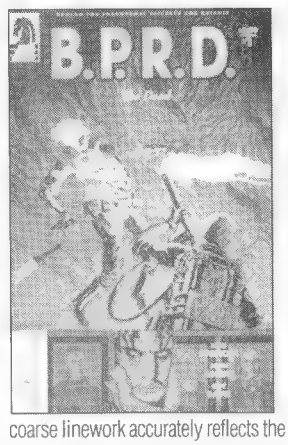
<-> Flash and Martian Manhunter are left on monitor duty and end up fighting a boring-as-heck Artificial Intelligence. As a set-up for a battle with the Crime Syndicate of Amerika, this is a bad start, as the level of threat posed by the A.I. doesn't convince, the story is badly executed, and the real bad guys appear far too late to hook the readers' interest. (DK) 3

The Losers 17

by Diggle & Jock; Vertigo

<-> The team infiltrates the enemy compound, and I fall asleep. This book has got so obnoxiously dull that no amount of well-choreographed action and decent art can save it. Boring. (KG) 3

<=> More secrets behind the rebel team's disastrous mission in Afghanistan are revealed, as the sinister Agent Max forces them to make an awful decision. Andy Diggle's otherwise smart script borders on exaggerated Hollywood villainy this issue – although arguably this continues the action flick tone of the title. Lee Loughridge employs some interesting colour effects for the



B.P.R.D. The Dead 1

by Mignola + Arcudi & Davis

The frog cult is spreading. Abe Sapien gets a step closer to discovering his 19th century origins. The BPRD is relocating, and a resurrected Green Beret joins the team; one who's not afraid to step on a few toes. Mike Mignola, John Arcudi and Guy Davis waste no time, setting the scene with a lively pace that heightens anticipation for the next issue. (DK) 8

Davis's arresting artwork graces the second miniseries charting the adventures of the BPRD team. Arcudi helps creator Mignola script another chilling tale as the Toad Men's infection spreads across the US; a new team commander is brought in, and Ape Sapien makes more emotional discoveries about his past. As before, Davis's coarse linework accurately reflects the unsettling side of the script. (MAT) 8

flashbacks, adding depth to Jock's heavily inked, scuzzy, stylised artwork. (MAT) 8

Majestic 4

by Abnett & Lanning + Kerschl

<-> "Reality's tearing wide open!" – well, doesn't it always? There are too many clichés in this story. Something from another dimension is not only fundamentally incompatible with 'our' reality, but turns into a bomb as a result and simultaneously opens up a dimensional portal, while a vulnerable bystander is trapped under a fallen beam. After a good build-up, this is a poor finish to the miniseries. (DK) 4

Nightwing 98

by Grayson & Phillips

Nightwing battles Firefly single-handed, in a terrific fight sequence reminiscent of some of the best chapters of Knightfall and Cataclysm. In fact, it takes me back to Detective Comics #727, in which Nightwing and Robin took on this very villain. Superior storytelling and nice artwork are complemented by Gregory Wright's evocative colours. It's just a pity about the mediocre cover. (DK) 7

Ocean 1

by Ellis & Sprouse + Story; WildStorm

Coffins containing the remains of aliens are found deep under the ice of a Jupiter moon, instigating the deployment of a hard-nosed UN agent, but who is trying to hinder his investigations? Warren Ellis establishes another smart sci-fi premise; but while the specifics are clever, this has the sense of a rejected Hollywood blockbuster with all that entails. However, Chris Sprouse's finely rendered linework is impressive enough to distract such nagging doubts. (MAT) 7

Planetary 21

by Ellis & Cassaday; WildStorm

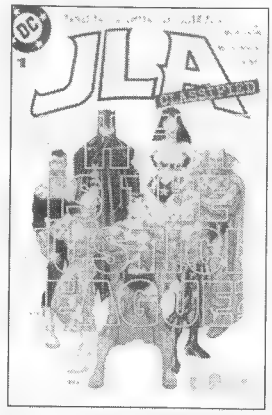
<=> Snow takes a chance to reflect on his hunt for the sinister Four by consulting a green-deadlocked mystic, only to have a trippy revelation regarding his purpose in life. Warren Ellis shows he's read enough copies of New Scientist to spout intriguingly profound statements about the nature of reality in this clever superhero title. John Cassaday maintains the usual outstanding level of art despite his heightened workload, with Laura Martin's restrained colours working in perfect unison. (MAT) 8

Swamp Thing 9

by Dysart & Breccia; Vertigo

Sallie uses a seed that Swamp Thing gave her to summon Alec as her lover, but instead attracts a demon looking for a body. Joshua Dysart's plot energetically opens up a new story arc, which is more than a little creepy. Enrique Breccia's art has a scary quality to it that's apt for this tale, and which emphasises the ghastliness of the situation – but looks over the top and unsubtle in the hell torture sequences. Nonetheless, this looks like the start of something ghoulishly good. (IM) 6

<+> Breccia makes a welcome return to the title, joined by new writer Dysart. A lonely young Cajun unintentionally releases a demon in an attempt to conjure herself a man; meanwhile Swampy's wife and daughter continue to greive for him. Dysart creates a suitably gothic tone for Breccia's etched Hieronymus Bosch-influenced artwork. (MAT) 8



JLA Classified 1

by Morrison & McGuiness + Vines

No Justice League, so who's Grant Morrison gonna call? Why, the International Ultramarine Corp, of course: here pitted against the savage fury of Gorilla Grodd. Genius ideas and fascinating idiosyncrasies are the very Morrisonisms that lead to accusations of self-indulgence on the writer's part, so there's no use complaining about vampire suns and haikus. The Knight's mini-spitfires and Morrison's nickname for Batman's 'special' arsenal are worth any quantity of Dadaism. (DK) 8

A team of new heroes takes on Grodd, and is consumed by a black cube that may be related to Nebula Man. The rest of the JLA is missing – can Batman save the day? While Morrison's central plot provides intrigue and promise, his construction of the fight scene – the first half of the book – is confusing and poorly directed. Ed McGuiness's art is vivid and uses imaginative panel arrangements, but there's something impersonal and over-polished about it that leaves me interested and encouraged but not admiring. (IM) 6

With the JLA missing in action, a brave band of lesser-known British superheroes attempts to stop the psychotic tyrant Grodd and his invading space gorillas. Morrison's return to DC's premier heroes is the usual mix of heady concepts, inter-dimensional threats and slightly awkward dialogue, but brilliant fun nevertheless. McGuinness's bulky, cartoon-like artwork might not seem immediately obvious for a Morrison script, yet he steps up the challenge with well-wrought designs and page layouts. (MAT) 7

We3 #2

by Morrison & Quitely; Vertigo

<=> The escaped techno-pets face the US army and a horde of cyber-rats as they attempt to make it back to their owners. Frank Quitely employs his sharp yet fragile lines, producing viscerally detailed panels, inventive page layouts and expressive faces to brilliant effect. But underneath the hyper-detailed pages of blood, violence and bullets, lies the heart of Grant Morrison's script, a rather touching story of three innocent animals trying to get home. (MAT) 8

Y: The Last Man 28

by Vaughan & Guerra + Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<=> Yorick's sick, and Dr Mann speculates that it's connected to the loss of his ring – will Agent 351 be persuaded to get it back, if it means losing the mythical Amulet of Helene? Brian K. Vaughan's taut writing takes the plot through several exciting new twists here, gives more detail on what happened when the plague struck and considerable insight into the character of our main players, all of which engages and keeps readers on tenterhooks. Pia Guerra adroitly pencils some nervous baseball park scenes and ensures uncertainty remains the dominant vibe. (IM) 7

Image

Savage Dragon 118

by Larsen

<=> This title has gone through a sticky patch, but it's back to its fun and action-packed old self again, even if its compass is spinning a bit crazily. As popular support grows for the unwilling hero to accept candidacy for President of the US, Dragon shies away from media attention and accepts the current President's offer of a country retreat. But has he been set up? (DK) 7

Ultra 3

by the Luna Brothers

<=> The *Sex and the City* approach to superhero titles continues to grab my attention with its killer combination of great dialogue, good characterisation and stylish art. This title is one of the great discoveries of the year, and I'd urge anyone with a passing interest in character-driven superhero tales to give it a try. You don't get many fist fights, but you do get in at the beginning of something very good. (RN) 8

Jack Staff 6

by Grist

<=> More parallel narratives as mysteries abound both in the past and the modern day. This is a finely crafted comic that shows just how skilful Paul Grist is at comics storytelling, both in terms of writing and art. Phil Elliott's colours make what is already strong look gorgeous. (KG) 9

<+++> You can't go wrong with this one. Grist's Image series begins a new story arc, spotlighting the vampire-hunting rag and bone men, Bramble & Son. It's funny. There's also a terrific Freedom Fighters flashback, paying homage to Marvel's Invaders team. As a bonus, Grist presents the first six in a series of 30 'Beats' cards (a Top Trumps-style card game featuring Jack Staff characters). Unmissable. (DK) 9

<=> Grist is at the top of his satirical form with the latest cover stars to his quintessentially English superhero title. Rag & bone merchants and part-time vampire hunters Bramble & Son are hired to exterminate brash young reporter (and bloodsucker) Becky Burdock. Grist also relates a tale from Castletown's past, as the Freedom Fighters take on Nazi villains during The Blitz. His deceptively naïve art and bright and breezy storylines bring a sense of fun to the staid world of serious superheroes. (MAT) 8

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 513

by Straczynski & Deodato

<=> The spectre of the Green Goblin continues to lurk over Spidey, proving what a formidable opponent the wall-crawler once had to face. But Spidey has other ghosts to worry about, namely Gwen Stacy's, and making sure that her children don't end up the same. There are some moments of comic relief, but this remains a dark and exciting chapter in this hero's never-easy life. (CEB) 8

<+> More fun and games as J. Michael Straczynski continues to drive the fanboys into a fury. I'm quite enjoying the direction of the plot, although it has been a bit slow up to this point. There are some good moments of humour here, and some effective dramatic scenes, neither of which are spoiled by the ugly art. (KG) 7

Astonishing X-Men 6

by Whedon & Cassaday

<=> The team learn the truth about the mutant experiments, but do not achieve the resolution they'd like. An interesting and low-key end to the first arc, which does have some oddities and gaps, but on the whole works rather well. It's clear that everyone involved is having a good time with this, and it makes for a good read. (KG) 7

<-> Ord's origins are revealed, and his future taken care of by Wolverine. Joss Whedon's plotting is bland and some of the round-up revelations disappointing, but with such a crackling script it's too easy to overlook such weaknesses. He clearly knows and loves these characters, witness his affectionate and witty scripting, full of off-hand yet memorable moments. John Cassaday's art is superb at times but loses its distinction in the action scenes and only really shines in the first and last pages. (IM) 6

<=> Nick Fury's arrival adds a disturbing twist to the inter-dimensional villain who offered a cure to mutation, but the newly resolved X-Men are determined not to let him escape. Whedon completes his first arc, appeasing diehard fans with the return of a beloved character and the team costumes, while managing to be amenable to newcomers with his great dialogue and easily accessible plots. Cassaday's lifelike art and wide panels bring an appropriately cinematic quality to the title. (MAT) 7

Avengers 503

by Bendis & Finch + Coipel + Miki

<=> The villain stands revealed, and the Avengers are torn apart by tragedy as this destructive story arc comes to a surprisingly low-key end. Good art and intelligent writing overcome the deficiencies in pacing and the "creative" use of continuity. There are problems, but on the whole this is a good read. (KG) 8

<++> Dr Strange exposes the villain and explains all. Brian Michael Bendis's writing is talk-heavy, and however good the script is I'd have liked more urgency in the denouement. I find the revealed motivation and history largely credible, despite it having enraged many fans, but much remains unanswered. Olivier Coipel's introductory pages

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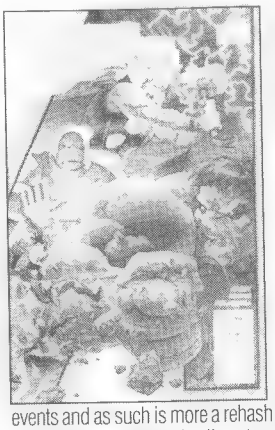


Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes 1

by Casey & Kolins + Hollowell

A trip back into Avengers history to see the bits that Stan and Jack (and the others) missed. This is well-written and the artwork is better than I'd expected, but there's an air of pointlessness about the whole thing, and at $3.50 it's far too expensive for what it actually is. (KG) 6

After the commercial failure of his more edgy recent work, Joe Casey returns to Marvel and mainstream superheroics to add his take on the early days of the Avengers. Unlike his previous attempt on the X-Men's origins, this series stays faithful to the Lee and Kirby story, simply filling in the gaps between events and as such is more a rehash than modernisation. Busy artist Scott Kolins employs his quirky and expressive lines to good effect, but Morry Hollowell's bright CGI colours don't really evoke '60s four-colour printing. (MAT) 6

occasionally look awful, goofy and shrill, but David Finch's art is thankfully more consistent, including a vivid, starkly coloured 'fantasy world' sequence and a creepy Dr Strange. A roller coaster: initially exhilarating, but with a nauseous aftertaste. (IM) 7

The sinister mastermind behind the Avengers' recent disasters is revealed and I'm left thinking, oh, right… With a little more build up the denouement might have been acceptable, but over a four-issue run it doesn't really make sense. Not to me anyway. In four short issues Bendis has (as promised) decimated the Avengers, and killed off several fan favourites at the same time. That's easy enough for anyone to do. The question now is: can he build something better from the wreckage? (RN) 7

<-> Dr Strange turns up to remind everyone of Scarlet Witch's full power and her rather turbulent mental life in the conclusion to Bendis's Avengers shake-up saga. Perhaps the greatest surprise here is how the story acknowledges continuity (how many folks remember her foray into motherhood?). Yet after the big, protracted build-up, it's a let-down when events get resolved so abruptly. Still, Finch's dynamically muscular artwork impresses, while a Lee & Kirby reprint reminds us of more naïve times. (MAT) 6

Black Widow 2

by Morgan & Parlov + Sienkiewicz

<-> Natasha and Phil search Stacey's house for clues to her killer. Bill Sienkiewicz's inks dramatise Goran Parlov's already striking pencils, and give the artwork a gloriously bruised quality. The plot is ordinary spy fare, but well-executed, this time with curious insights into Natasha's history that the first issue lacked. (IM) 7

Captain America & The Falcon 9

by Priest & Bennett + Jadson

<+> Another death, another resurrection, but I can handle cliffhanger revivals and at least this one was unexpected; and Cap uncovers links between the Rivas gang and AIM agents' deaths. Christopher Priest's plotting takes a cool swerve with the resurrection; the 'death' was a disappointment, so I'm pleased to see it. Joe Bennett's faces do feel flat, but there's a warmth to his work that I enjoy and admire; his Cap truly strikes a formidable pose. The series has an uncertain future, but it's good enough to survive. (IM) 6

Daredevil 66

by Bendis & Maleev

<-> Alexander Bont was the Kingpin prior to Wilson Fisk, and was taken down by Daredevil. His lawyer was Matt Murdock. Freshly released from jail, he learns that Matt is also Daredevil. Brian Michael Bendis writes an intriguing, era-swapping tale that's filled with Marvel history but not burdened by it, and sympathetically but subtly writes an old man lost in modern times. Alex Maleev's artwork looks disturbing in the black and white pulp fiction homage but lacks the chilling tone Dave Stewart's colours add to the book ending pages. (IM) 7

Captain America 32

by Kirkman & Eaton + Geraci

<-> The property-damage wrought by Captain America's latest tussle with the Red Skull is spectacular if nothing new, and Robert Kirkman once more demonstrates he has a good ear for naturalistic dialogue that moves the story forward without seeming forced. However, the story is wafer thin, and the damp squib ending of part four of *Super Patriot* (ha ha! geddit?) betrays everything that was enjoyable about the previous three issues. (DK) 3

<-> Cap faces off against a battle-armoured Red Skull, and discovers Diamondback's fate. Kirkman's plot explanation is tired and disappointing but does make sense of an odd moment from last issue. Despite the anti-climactic plot twist – and uninspired use of the Red Skull – Kirkman has given both Cap and readers a rollicking ride, which is more than most other *Disassembled* tie-in books managed. Scott Eaton's pencils have modestly impressed and Drew Geraci's dense inks alternated between being vividly menacing and choking subtlety out the pencils. Hit and miss, yes, but enjoyably so. (IM) 5

<=> In a perfect world every Bendis comic would have artwork by Maleev. They're as well-suited as Lee & Kirby, O'Neill & Adams and Claremont & Byrne. The new story arc sees the release from prison of the Kingpin who ruled the city before Wilson Fisk took over. Older, wiser and seriously annoyed, he's out to claim his city back. As good as ever. (RN) 8

<+-> After last issue's revelation regarding Matt Murdock's previous employer, Bendis looks back at the life of the previous Kingpin, his rise to power and ruinous run-in with a young Daredevil. These flashbacks allow artist Maleev to experiment with his styles, from striped black and white, to faux-'60s simplicity. Bendis is in his element with such wise-guy tales, making for another outstanding story arc on his justly acclaimed run on the title. (MAT) 8

District X #6

by Hine & Medina + Sicat; Marvel Knights

<-> Mr M heals Ortega's daughter, but is accused of hurting her, leading Bishop and Ortega to confront him. David Hine's plot seems to suddenly rush into this confrontation, and the twists are clichéd, but it's all passed off in style. Lan Medina's pencils balance gentle and twisted but with limited success, so it's Drew Hennessy's inks that effectively get to the heart of the conflicting emotions. (IM) 6

Doctor Spectrum 3

by Barnes & Foreman

<-> The army makes plans to amputate Joe's hand; and the crystal sifts through Joe's memories, establishing if he's a worthy host. The detail that Sara "Samm" Barnes gives Joe's life is interesting and revealing, but I find it increasingly difficult to wade through it when I've known the character so briefly in Supreme Power and never really cared for him. Well written as it is (and it is – and for once justifying a six issue series, rather than feeling padded and decompressed), I'm running out of reasons to care about Joe's miserable early years. (IM) 6

Excalibur 6

by Claremont & Lopresti + Adams

<-> Xavier's crew endeavours to escape from the looters who've temporarily neutralised their powers. Chris Claremont's plot feels undeveloped and hackneyed, and I'm baffled that Unus fails to recognise Magneto. Aaron Lopresti's pencils work well on Freakshow's fight scenes but are otherwise enjoyably unexceptional. Developments in *Avengers Disassembled* promise exciting changes here, but for now the book risks sliding into mediocrity. (IM) 5

Fantastic Four 519

by Waid & Wieringo + Kesel

<=> To save Sue, Reed pulls a switch, one that Johnny might have something to say about when, as a result, a certain world-eater takes interest in him. Writer Mark Waid and artist Mike Wieringo are at the top of their game, and judging by the cliffhanger this issue, will cement their place in the upper echelons alongside this title's greatest ever creators. (CEB) 8

<+> Zius views Sue as a threat to his people's safety from Galactus and is determined to kill her; can Reed talk him out of it? Waid writes a breezy, all-ages Fantastic Four, but this

clumsy plot does not hold up to any thought or examination. Weiringo's pretty, lucid art helps keep the book accessible but when combined with such light storytelling (which tries to fabricate suspense by having characters over-react and speak without thinking) eliminates tension. Writing successful family and/or nostalgia books needs more sophistication than Mark Waid's providing. (IM) 5

Iron Man 89

by Ricketts & Kollins

<-> Tony Stark dukes it out with the imposter Iron Man, reclaims his secret identity by publicly vowing to never wear the armour again, and mourns Rumiko's death. The battle is massively anti-climactic, with Tony only indirectly responsible for the outcome. Mark Ricketts' *Disassembled* plot failed to develop tension or to encourage affection for the characters, leaving me as uninvolved by the end as I felt at the start. Scott Kolins' art feels craggy and emotionally flat, which J.D. Mettler's frequently jaundiced colours only intensifies, leaving this reader uninvolved and frankly disinterested. (IM) 3

Madrox 2

by David & Raimondi + Hennessy + Reber; Marvel Knights

<+> Madrox tries to uncover who killed one of his dupes. Peter David's dark, witty and rich writing ensures this book heads my favourites list. He has an imaginative and provocative read of Madrox's abilities that make the character more interesting and gives the book a clever and droll humour. Pablo Raimondi's pencils are fluent and evocative, Drew Hennessy's inks graceful and shadowy, both in keeping with the film noir themes. Madrox deserves to be an on-going title, not limited: the art is very cool, and with the sharp and darkly humoured writing makes this book unmissable. (IM) 8

Mystique 20

by McKeever & Garcia + Fernandez

<-> Shortpack's missing, and Xavier commands Mystique to find him – and the Quiet Man's identity is revealed. A Fantomex appearance fails as a distraction, leaving this feeling light on plot, and even Sean McKeever's usually reliably cutting asides fall flat, the scripting feeling weighty and padded. Manuel Garcia's art struggles to impress, perhaps partly because of the limited vision in the script, so this issue feels light and entirely dispensable. Shame, because it looks to be a gripping arc overall. (IM) 5

Powers 5

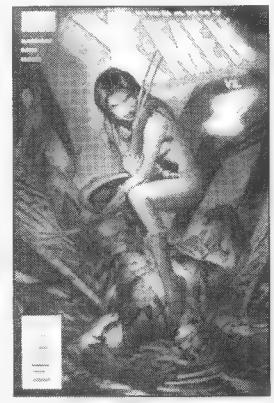
by Bendis & Oeming; Icon

<=> While Christian leads the search teams, Deena is horrifically tortured. Michael Avon Oeming's vivid artwork makes an unpleasant subject all the more visceral and shocking for the reader. His memorable use of shadow and close-ups creates haunting, pain-filled images which are all the more intense for Peter Pantazis' flashes of burning colours. Brian Michael Bendis's writing is always strong, with the rape and murder of a young boy a brutal but apt dead end for Christian's investigation and the dialogue as illustrative as any picture. Adult themes, never gratuitously explicit, for those with strong stomachs; if that's what you're looking for, you won't find it done better. (IM) 8

<+> While the exiled superheroes bicker, Walker continues his desperate hunt for his kidnapped partner Deena, uncovering a shockingly dark side of the city. Bendis certainly isn't afraid to provoke controversy on his creator-owned series; you really have to pinch yourself to remember this is published by the increasingly conservative Marvel Comics. Oeming manages to bring a suitable air of menace to his angular linework, though worryingly he appears to relish illustrating the seedy sides of the script. (MAT) 7

Uncanny X-Men 451

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer



<=> A shocking creative move, even by the standards of the X-Men, as X-23 is revealed to share more similarities than just claws with Wolverine. A fast-paced romp, with an entertainment factor and a serious-but-not-too-serious approach that so few comics possess nowadays, yet which is sure to please both old and new readers of this title. (CEB) 7

<-> The X-Men confront X-23 and learn of her Weapon X-related origins. Despite a couple of rewarding scenes, a protracted, needless and then easily finished-off fight with new villain Geetch and an off-panel rescue of a kidnap victim reinforce the idea that Chris Claremont's writing is by numbers rather than from the heart. A scene of telepathic illusions directly lifts from his Dark Phoenix Saga; this is lazy and short on ideas, not an homage. Alan Davis and Mark Farmer's artwork is capable, but mostly unexciting. Disappointingly ordinary. (IM) 4

Secret War 3

by Bendis & Dell'otto

<-> Spider-Man's having flashbacks of a battle in Latveria that he doesn't remember fighting, and Daredevil comes under attack at home. It seems the secret war our heroes fought has come back to bite them, with writer Brian Michael Bendis enjoyably amping up the threat at every turn. Gabriele Dell'otto's painted work looks gorgeous, but struggles to make smaller, talking head panels look as impressive as the delicious wide-scale stuff. (IM) 7

She-Hulk 8

by Slott & Bobillo + Sosa

<+> She-Hulk needs both her legal and fighting skills to out-box The Champion, who's empowered by an Infinity Gem. Dan Slott's script merrily pokes fun at worthy, self-righteous books and simultaneously gives She-Hulk a credibly written boost of strength. Juan Bobillo's pencils underline the sense of humour in the writing and help ensure that readers have an enjoyable book in their hands. (IM) 7

Spectacular Spider-Man 20

by Jenkins & Medina + Vlasco

<-> Spider-Man uses his new powers to glean from Ana's hive mind how to move against her. Paul Jenkins' plot makes little sense beyond that: Spider-Man dies, then inexplicably he's alive and no longer arachnid. We're told he's pregnant, then that idea is ignored. We see Ana explode, but Spider-Man says he defused the bomb. Too much exposition can be a bad thing, but with too little readers don't know what's going on, resulting in messes like this. Paco Medina pencils some appropriately gruesome scenes, but they're overshadowed by the baffling writing. (IM) 2

Spider-Man 7

by Millar & Dodson + Dodson; Marvel Knights

<=> I haven't enjoyed a Spider-Man title this much in ages. In fact, I haven't enjoyed a Spider-Man title this much since the first 120 issues of the original run. In a market saturated by Spidey-books, this is the definitive version. Mark Millar gives us a classic rendition of Peter Parker and his mature reader touches give the book a sharper edge without ruining the mainstream appeal. I'm not usually a fan of extra titles for popular characters, but this is a step in the right direction. (RN) 8

Ultimate Elektra 3

by Carey & Larroca

<=> The Mike Carey/Salvador Larroca team deserves to stay together after this mini, preferably on a regular Ultimate Elektra series, but anything will do! There's nothing high profile about this title, but once again Carey's natural flair for dialogue, characterisation and solid plotting elevates what should have been just another miniseries, to the status of a great comicbook. The character of Elektra has been handled very poorly in the past few years – now at last she has a script and art team worthy of her. (RN) 8

Ultimate Fantastic Four 12

by Ellis & Immonen + von Grawbadger

<+> It's the final part of the Four's first fight with Victor Van Damme, and writer Warren Ellis continues to show the team with an impressive early mastery of their powers. Under Ellis the rivalry between Reed and Victor feels more realistic, with one-upmanship on both sides, but the other characters are still in need of room for these Ultimate versions to blossom. Stuart Immonen's Human Torch is one of the best ever depictions, helped by Dave Stewart's distinguished colours; the dark, grim artwork is generally impressive, with stylish, shadowy inks courtesy of Wade von Grawbadger. (IM) 7

<-> Arch-enemies Van Damme and Reed Richards face off, while his team-mates use the full brunt of their powers against the metal megalomaniac. Ellis's take on the Ultimatised version of Marvel's First Family was initially promising, bringing more convincing techno-speak and the threat of the group's greatest enemy. Unfortunately this younger cloven-hoofed Doom doesn't exude the same menace or grandeur of the original. In fact, Immonen's unsuitable design makes him look rather weedy. (MAT) 6

Ultimate Nightmare 3

by Ellis & Epting + Decastro + Palmer

<=> The teams finally enter the compound to find that horrors wait within. The pace is still far too slow, but it's good to see the story move from building the mood into some action, without the essential spookiness being harmed. The writing is solid and the art, while not from "regular" artist Trevor Hairsine, is generally good. (KG) 8

<++> The Ultimates and X-Men teams both encounter adversaries at the Tunguska army base. Steve Epting's pencils are excellent in these underground, darkly-lit locations, which are adeptly illuminated by Frank Darmata's often subtle colouring. Warren Ellis's plot is still protracted, but the well-written fight scenes do at least offer some entertainment along the way. (IM) 7

Ultimate X-Men 52

by Vaughan & Kubert + Miki

<-> Fenris try to convince Rogue to join their mutant Robin Hood outlaw set-up, and won't take "no" for an answer. The Fenris twins are all concept and no personality, too often the fate of non-core Ultimate characters. Writer Brian K. Vaughan does develop Gambit, building up from Chuck Austen's Ultimate Gambit and enhancing rather than re-writing; but the plot is by numbers, rather than giving Ultimate stories a new twist of their own. Andy Kubert's Rogue looks too old, sometimes resembling Cher, and some appalling panels lack vision, but his backgrounds are generally good. (IM) 5

Uncanny X-Men 452

by Claremont & Park + Sibal

<++> The X-Men track Sage in the bowels of the now decrepit Hellfire Club, leading Emma Frost and Rachel to Hong Kong – and Selene. While this issue is a little confusingly plotted at first glance, it makes more sense on reflection, and Chris

Black Eyed Susan 1

by Neighly & Hadiwidjaja + Dillon; Mad Yak Press

Mel crashes her plane and after repairs gets home to discover her world's been devastated by Martian tripods. While we've seen survivor stories many times over, writer Patrick Neighly creates an interesting and sympathetic central character in Mel; unfortunately her new friends Gus and Kid as yet lack those qualities, and too much of the plot is over-familiar, painfully lacking a new angle. Donny Hadiwidjaja's black and white art has some excellent detail but resorts to too many comicbook clichés in the layout. This might yet develop into an exciting book, but it makes an inauspicious debut. (IM) 5

Claremont enjoyably scripts the rivalry between Emma and Rachel, these two dominating the issue. Sadly John Sibal's inks consume the best of Andy Park's pencils and ruin the artwork, with the female clotted hair a constant distraction from otherwise quality linework. (IM) 6

Wolverine 21

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<+> Wolverine fights Elektra and chaos, death and destruction ensue. Absolutely spiffing art combines with a story that places the emphasis firmly on fun. It's also nice to see Wolverine portrayed in a more realistic way than the usual God Of Combat. Good stuff. (KG) 8

US Indies

Boneyard 14

by Moore; NBM

<+++> Suddenly Boneyard is supercharged! Richard Moore cranks the action up a notch, where previously, loveable characters have been quite sweet to one another and looked after their common interests. Abby fumes while Nessie tries to get her fishy paws on Michael; and a shuffling horde of the dead is on the move. There's still romance, scheming, and gentle monster comedy; but a zombie plague demands a kung-fu response. (DK) 8

Boneyard 15

by Richard Moore; NBM

<+> The arrival of zombies in Raven's Hollow brings a disturbing, horrifying and downright apocalyptic twist to this enjoyable comic. If they can get past the lovey-doveyness of Richard Moore's cast of cute supernatural monsters, even zombie gore fans, and certainly anyone who liked *Shawn of the Dead*, should get something out of this current scenario. (DK) 9

Cenozoic

by Fearing; O-P-P

The two starring strips here are Mark Fearing's *Jerry – Caveman Inventor* and *Cave Bear and Duck*. It's all very much in the vein of Asterix et al, with a soft-edge that appeals to the younger audience, while simultaneously providing a more subtle harder edge for the older reader. The characters, notably Duck and Bear, require extra development, but in this style of story that tends to be a gradual – but rewarding to watch – process. (CEB) 7

Dead @ 17: Blood of Saints 4

by Howard; Viper Comics

<=> Nara and Violet face off, but the evil Bolabogg soon gets in on the act. In a final issue that's reliant on tired, movie-esque clichés, it's interesting to see such an unexpected ending. Was this a deliberate deception on the reader by writer-artist Josh Howard? His art is as exemplary as ever. A series not without faults, but one that has always oozed potential, and a return to tap into it is warranted. (CEB) 7

Dub Trub: Our World is in Danger Now!

by Allen; Candle Light Press; $9.95

Earth has been at war with Voyd for several years, after an invasion that would've been a conquest if not for mankind's two cybernetically enhanced female champions, Special Agents Red and Black. Carter Allen's writing mixes in classic sci-fi film mentality with some tongue-in-cheek, while the art is as individual as it is impressive. A read that will satisfy those after something a bit different but not too convoluted. (CEB) 7

Dungeon Zenith: Duck Heart Volume 1

by Sfar & Trondheim; NBM; $14.95

Herbert the duck accidentally causes the death of a chosen warrior, so assumes his identity. Sent on the warrior's perilous quest, bungling Herbert encounters back-chatting belts, vegetarian dragons, robotic elephants, and crafty sacks. The craftsmanship of Joann Sfar and Lewis Trondheim shines brightly through as they mock the pretentiousness of their own fictional world. This infuses the work with plenty of comedy and humanity. Publisher NBM is becoming synonymous with the word "quality". (CEB) 8

Even More Fund Comics

by various; Sky Dog; $10

A second volume in aid of the Comicbook Legal Defense Fund, with more strips to make you wonder 'what was that all about?', together with some absolute corkers, such as *The Early Bird Special* (Howard Porter), *Bad Influences* (Ande Parke & Mike Hawthorne), *Julienne Fryes* (Bill Morrison & Dan DeCarlo), *Boondoggle* (Steve Stegelin), *Bear Suits* (Neil Klyde & Fernando Pinto), and *Simone & Ajax* (Andrew Pepoy), featuring a 'Dubya' parody. (DK) 8

George Pérez: Modern Masters

by Nolen-Weathington; TwoMorrows Publishing; $12.95

Wonder Woman, Solus, JLA/Avengers, Sachs & Violens, and many more besides have been blessed by the pencils of George Pérez. As part of its *Modern Masters* series of books, TwoMorrows blesses us fans with a frank, honest interview with the man himself. And it doesn't cut any corners: accompanied by pictures (rare and renowned), it comes in at nearly a mighty 100 pages, even followed by an art gallery. All it's missing is a checklist. If you love Pérez's work, you'll definitely love this. (CEB) 8

Manga Mania: Shoujo

by Hart; Watson-Guptill; $19.95

Best-selling instruction author Christopher Hart returns to lift the lid on a popular sub-genre of manga known as "shoujo". A charming storytelling form, shoujo gives priority to romance and adventure. Hart, assisted by a team of top artists, takes us through it all and continues on to expressions and computer colouring. Although this may sound daunting to a beginner, Hart's clear and concise handling makes sure that it's not. Urbane. (CEB) 8

Demo 11: Midnight to Six

by Wood & Cloonan; AIT/Planet Lar

<+++> Brad, Jill and Jace wrote a slacker manifesto in school, rejecting education and careers; but now they're adults, can they stick to it? While this is the second consecutive issue to not feature powers, it doesn't matter here, or affect the reading of the plot. It's a thoughtful reflection on drop-out culture that consistently grabs the reader and communicates the slowly-changing lives of the central three. It's Becky Cloonan's expressive black and white art that takes this book from good to great, though, which underscores the unhappiness felt by all three, and the mundanity of their lives. (IM) 8

<=> A group of friends vow to drop out of society, but can their dreams of slackerdom last forever? After some rather emotional and serious issues, Brian Wood changes tack, producing a much more light-hearted take on directionless youth. Becky Cloonan experiments with her style yet again, mimicking overblown cartoony manga and employing a much thicker brush line. (MAT) 7

Masters of the Universe Volume 3 #4

by Scott & Santalucia + Fontana; MVCreations

<=> The Snake Men go after Evil-Lyn, but the Masters have other ideas... or not. There's no denying that this looks great, but the story – while competent and polished – doesn't feel ever so much like MOTU any more due to its direction and detours. The 'fanart' section however is outstanding this issue. (CEB) 7

Owly: The Way Home & The Bittersweet Summer

by Runton; Top Shelf Productions; $10

In the tradition of such creators as Raymond Briggs and Lewis Trondheim, Andy Runton's wordless Owly has equal appeal to adult and young readers alike. These lovingly crafted stories of friendship also mark a notable departure for publisher Top Shelf, which rarely strays into the all-ages market. Maybe Owly is therefore responsible for the start of a tradition too? (CEB) 7

Rob Zombie's Spookshow International 9

by Zombie & Su + Boutin + Laguna; MVCreations

<=> Inane, daft and stupid, and that's just this comic's star, El Superbeasto. The comedy continues unabated with undead musicians, giant robots, clowns, cowboy bigfoots, and plenty of subversiveness. If you like Rob Zombie's movies – or even if you don't – you'll like this. (CEB) 7

Trailer Park of Terror Halloween Special 1

by various; Imperium Comics; $3.99

A framing sequence in which a psycho killer stalks horror comic host Norma is inter-cut with four nightmare tales, parodying Halloween among other film and comics staples. To fault such an irreverent comic for callousness would be missing the point, but the poignancy of the death of one victim means the horror twist leaves a bad taste in the mouth. funny, and with an unsettling, EC-like quality. (DK) 7

Worn Tuff Elbow 1

by Bell; Fantagraphics

A wonderfully odd story from Marc Bell, as bolshy Frenchman Monsieur Moustache pushes his weight around, trampling over the smaller denizens of Bag Town. Bell's doodly artwork resembles something like a surreal Max Fleischer cartoon. However, unlike his Underground Comix predecessors, his storylines are charmingly whimsical. Although completely bizarre, you can't help but be taken in by the allure of Bell's imagination. (MAT) 8

You Can Draw Manga 6

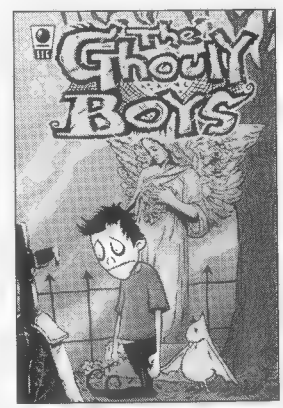
by Espinosa & Jackson + various; Antarctic Press; $4.95

<+++> A real treat this issue, as artists Rod Espinosa, Sherard Jackson, Mike Cervantes and Brian Denham give guidance into probably the most overlooked area of comic

The Ghouly Boys 1

by Christopher; Slave Labor

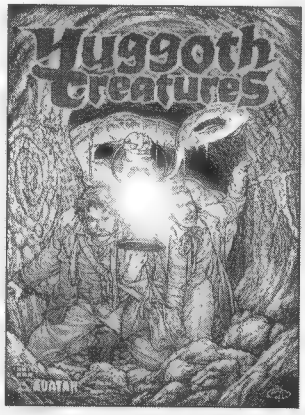
Written and drawn by Christopher, this is the story of a dead boy and an overweight bat (with a burning ambition to fight crime), and how they are rescued from an orphanage run by a mean woman. It's another addition to the cute goth genre that's a Slave Labor speciality, and sets up a good premise in its first issue. Thankfully the rhyming couplets are limited to the first six pages. (DK) 7



The Ghouly Boys 2

by Christopher; Slave Labor

<=> The zombie child and his pet bat (who knows criminals to be a superstitious and cowardly lot), meet a wolf boy in diapers whose parents are murdered in a mawkish sequence of seven pages. The rhyming couplets are back again; at least *Bambi* didn't have those! The enlarged cast will win you over if you give it a chance, particularly the bat with its vigilante antics. (DK) 6



Yuggoth Creatures 1

by Johnston & various; Avatar Press

An anthropologist recounts his adventures in the Cthulhu mythos in this derivative but enjoyable Lovecraftian yarn from Avatar. Seven artists each draw a chapter of the story. Juan Jose Ryp's finely detailed artwork lacks enough contrast to be easily legible. Andres Guinaldo's sketchy style is similarly hampered; whereas Dheeraj Verma, Jacen Burrows and Matt Martin clearly define their linework with black ink. It's just a real shame that haphazard caption placement occasionally obscures important details. A little more attention to detail, please. (DK) 7

art aesthetics: sounds effects and word balloons. There's some serious food for thought, presented in an easy to understand, but never dumbed down, manner. Excellent education for all those interested in the techniques involved in comicbook storytelling. (CEB) 9

UK Newsstand

Astonishing Spider-Man 119

by Straczynski + Romita Jr & Hanna/Lee + Ditko; Panini

<-> The need to shoehorn in a 'Nuff Said lessens the impact of the storyline and J. Michael Straczynski is forced to 'cheat' with Aunt May's use of e-mails. MJ's cameo is well-handled, though. The second story is a return to form (and narrative) while a classic rematch with Doctor Octopus rounds off the issue. (KM) 7

The Avengers United 46

by Busiek + Dwyer & Remender/ Thomas + Buckler & Sinnot; Panini

<+> Kang is victorious as the Avengers and the US forces admit defeat. In this instance, the obligatory 'Nuff Said episode actually works in Kurt Busiek's favour. The impact of Kang's decimation of Washington is greater without dialogue or sound effects, and the final pages powerfully evoke the sense of desperation. (KM) 7

Batman: Legends 14

by various; Panini

<+> *Broken City* continues to impress with its dialogue and visuals. It also has the welcome effect of completing the style and tone of the underrated second strip by Brian K. Vaughan and Scott McDaniel. The archive reprint brings together O'Neill, Adams, Giordano and Râ's Al Ghûl – as such, it can't go wrong. (KM) 8

Doctor Who Magazine 350

by Gray + Geraghty & Roach; Panini

<+> A landmark 25th anniversary issue, which continues the excellent Cybermen epic *The Flood*. As an added treat, there's a free reproduction of Doctor Who Weekly #1 from 1979, complete with "Comic Strips! Features! Pin-Ups!" but sadly no transfers. Sigh, if only it still cost 12p… (KM) 9

Essential X-Men 119

by various; Panini

<+> Frank Quitely (re)joins Grant Morrison for the conclusion to the Cassandra Nova saga, his excellent visuals highlighting the frustration of their infrequent appearances. Adam Warren's completely misjudged Psylocke flashback seems to have drawn on pirate DVDs of *Austin Powers* for its English characterisation and dialogue. Still, it makes the X-Treme strip look better… (KM) 6

Judge Dredd The Megazine 225

by various; Rebellion

<-> The Megazine seems to be treading water this issue, which makes it a less than satisfying read; and the cover art is ugly, too. A cheeky guest appearance lifts *The Simping Detective* above the rest. David Bishop's ongoing text feature comes across as dismissive of some classic Dredd storylines of yesteryear; and illegal fight stories from both John Smith and John Wagner prove you can have too much of a good thing. (DK) 6

Mighty World of Marvel Volume 3 #23

by various; Panini

<=> Turk steals the Stilt Man's armour and tries to salvage his tattered reputation, while

Marvel Rampage 1

by Scanlon & Royle + Taylor; Panini

Get some action satisfaction from this all-new kids' mag. Fronted by Marvel icons, there are features on all the latest action-packed movies, video games and TV shows. Best of all, are two homegrown strips, Hulk and X-Men. Verdict? Rampage rocks! (CEB) 8

Both cover and contents are crammed with eye-straining sound bites and visuals to hold the attention; the main attractions are the original UK strips, featuring *X-Men vs Arcade* and *Hulk vs The Brood*. Given the six-page limit, both work well within their limitations. MWOM for younger readers? No bad thing! (KM) 7

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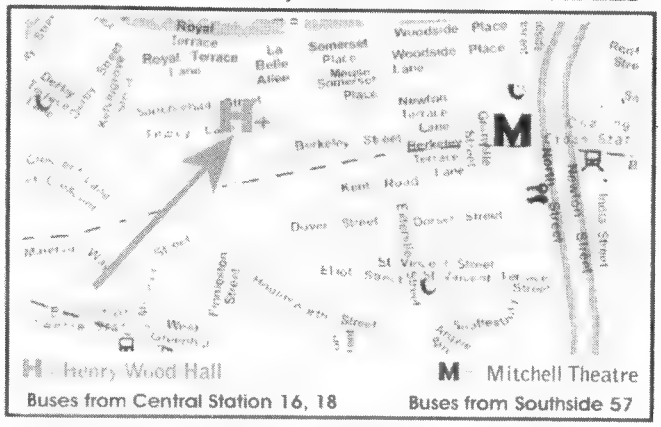

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Matt Murdock wears down hapless girlfriend Heather Glenn. Miller's mix of comedy and emotional drama is masterful. The Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD strips, though more conventionally narrative, show off Jim Steranko's groundbreaking layouts to great effect. (KM) 7

Toxic 28

by Stringer + Holden & various; Egmont Magazines

<-> In between cool video game features, excellent competitions and lots more, there's a cast of all-original, always-enjoyable comic strips: John Short and Alex Paterson's *Rex*; Jaspre Bark and Mark Daniels' *Time Toilet*; Stu Taylor and Paul J. Holden's *'Nanas & Custard*; and Lew Stringer's *Team Toxic*. Mucky mayhem sure to please. (CEB) 7

2000AD Progs 1411-1414

by various; Rebellion

<++> What is there to say about 2000AD right now, other than that it's quite marvellous? *Lobster Random* returns with panache. *Total War* is the best Judge Dredd epic in quite some time. *Strontium Dog* is pure class from John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra. *Robo-Hunter*'s lightweight and quirky run ends tidily, and *Asylum II* goes out with a bang. *Faces*, an overdue sequel to *Freaks*, looks like a hit. (DK) 10

Warhammer Comic 85

by Peaty & Erskine + various; Black Library

<=> So a change to a bi-monthly schedule sees Warhammer Monthly become Warhammer Comic. Apart from that, it's blood-splattering business as usual. Anthony Williams provides the cover; Mr Moodiness himself, Frazer Irving, draws *Plaguebringer*, and handling *The Pilgrim* is Shaun Thomas, a gifted artist bound to flourish here and at 2000AD. If you like hard-edged fantasy or sinister sci-fi, pick this up. (CEB) 7

UK Indies

Assassin School 4

by Emms & Corts + Mar; AP Comics

When giant robots attack, only the teen warriors of the assassin school can save the day. This comic should be wonderful, but for some reason falls short. Not bad, by any means, but a big disappointment. (KG) 4

B1N4RY 2

by Emms & Sutherns + O'Grady; AP Comics

A security guard finds himself surrounded by strangeness and intrigue which change his life forever. The general concept of this book is a bit too familiar to be exciting, but there are enough nice touches in the writing and (especially) the art to make that less of an issue than it should be. Pretty good. (KG) 6

Brodie's Law 3

by Grant & Bircham + Osiyemi; Pulp Theatre

<=> Jack at last gets the ability to swap identities, but what is he going to do with it? Not play practical jokes on his mates, that's for sure! David Bircham's artwork is superbly sinister, and ever-popular writer Alan Grant begins to put his foot down on the pedal. This issue will really get you hooked on this bashful Brit comic. (CEB) 7

Monster Club 1

by Emms & Bain; AP Comics

A new member joins the monster-fighting squad. The art style is exaggerated in odd places, but is all the more interesting for that. Storywise, while the character interactions are solid, the characters themselves and the general set-up of the series just don't interest me at all. (KG) 5

Monster Club 2

by Emms & Sutherns + O'Grady; AP Comics

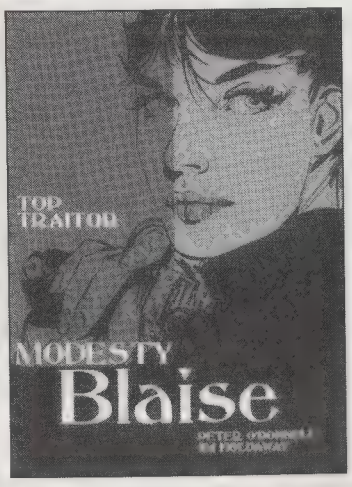
<+> The team heads off to stop a demonic beast. This issue has a greater emphasis on action, and is a good fit for the art team, who do a wonderful job. In terms of writing, there's not a great deal to comment on as the action means that this is a rather lightweight issue. (KG) 6

Small Press

Telephone Thing

by P.B. Rainey; £2
http://www.bookoflists.co.uk/

Short comic about a guy dating a girl who works for a telephone sex line. This could be a sensitive issue, but in this comic, it's downright funny. The artwork is clear, simple and efficient. Some illustrated song lyrics at the end which, although nicely drawn, seem a bit like filler. (LO) 6



UK Collections

Modesty Blaise: Top Traitor

by O'Donnell, Holdaway: Titan

<-> Titan's reprint series continues in overdrive, reissuing the classic Modesty Blaise series of newspaper strips in sequence, but this time around it's a case of 'the engines canna take it Cap'n' as the print quality of the second story, *The Vikings*, is appalling. Saturated in black ink, it's a printing error that ruins the quality of the original story and art. There may possibly have been problems with the source material, but even so, surely the strips could have been presented better than this? (RN) 7

Q&A

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Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

War Picture Library

Dave Gibbons via e-mail

JUST wanted to chip in on the **War Picture Library** topic (**CI** #178). I, too, have that John Severin issue and it's a rare gem.

My understanding is that he only did that issue, but that Joe Kubert also did a single issue. I've never been able to track it down. Anyone out there seen that issue?

Underground

Antonio Ghura
via Delle Azalee 129
00172 Roma, Italy

DOES anyone know of any underground comix distributors in America, apart from Last Gasp?

The Homestead Book Company claims to be the world's oldest distributor of counter-culture books and mag, founded in 1972 by David Tatelman. Their details: Homestead Book Company, P.O. Box 17444, Seattle, WA 98127. Tel: 001 206782-4532, fax 001 206 784-9328. Email: davet@homesteadbook.com.

• Good buddy Bub Plant is another lifer, you can contact him at: Bud Plant Comic Art, PO Box 1689 Grass Valley, CA 95945. Tel: 001 530-273-2166, fax: 001 530-273-0915. Email: LaDonna@budplant.com

• Rip-Off Press are still out there too, at P.O. Box 4686, Auburn, CA 95604. Tel: 530 885-8183 or email them at: mail@ripoffpress.com.

*They're the main ones, but if you want more, log on to: www.ugcomix.info/links/retail-links.html. Bteween them, they should shift some of your **Truly Amazing Love Stories**, Antonio!*

Three moore

Mark Badham-Moore via e-mail

ARE there going to be any more **Arrowsmith** comics?

Also, I've just finished the marvelous **Scarlet Traces** by Ian Edginton and D'Israeli and I just wondered if there were any plans for a sequel. It ended well, but with plenty of opportunity for more, especially with regards to the line near the end: "There are worse things on Mars than us". I think D'Israeli's artwork now is so great, I'm too envious for words!

Finally, as part of the DC Comics/Rebellion deal do you know, or can it be found out, if the story *Snow/Tiger* from **2000AD** will be published in this first year's round of releases?

Where are they now?

"Mad" Steven Morrell
881 Barnsley Road, Sheffield Lane Top
Sheffield S5 0QJ

WHAT are the following up to? Pat Broderick; Jackson "Butch" Guice; Michael Adams; Luke McDonnell; William Messner Loebs; Greg La Roque; Mark (MD) Bright; Ken Lashley; Kevin West; Lee Moder; Paul Ryan; Eddie Newell; Jeff Matsuda; Phil Jiminez; and Oscar Jiminez?

Marvel UK annuals, continued...

David Robertson via e-mail:
d1robertson@hotmail.com

TO HELP whoever is researching Marvel UK annuals, this is my stash, excluding those mentioned by Chris Bunting in **CI** #178. Where the date is in brackets, is the publishing year. Where it is not, this is the year stated on the book.

Marvel Comic Annual (1970) – Kirby Thor, Captain America, Inhumans; Colan Iron Man; Trimpe Hulk.

Marvel Annual 1976 – Trimpe Hulk cover. Hulk/Spider-Man and Namor/Hulk team-ups.

The Titans Annual 1978 – Kirby FF; Heck/Everett Black Widow. Empire Strikes Back Annual (1980) – reprints Al Williamson adaptation (in severely truncated form).

Star Wars Annual (1979) – reprints Carmine Infantino, with loads of articles.

Spider-Man Annual (1979) – Lizard/Stegron story and short Stan Lee feature. Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981) – reprints adaptation.

X-Men Collector's Edition (no date) – early '80s, reprints Neal Adams first X-Men strips.

Empire Strikes Back Annual No. 2 (1981) – reprints Williamson, Simonson, Palmer and Infantino post-Empire stories. Good stuff!

Hulk Annual (1981) – Trimpe reprints. David Lloyd original painted art.

Star Wars Annual (not dated – I'd guess 1982 as a publishing date) – reprints Infantino's post-Empire stories.

Hulk Annual (not dated) –reprints Claremont/Sal Buscema monster showdown story.

Return of the Jedi Annual (1983) – reprints Al Williamson adaptation.

Hulk Annual (1983) – Kirby, Rich Buckler reprints. Also Paul Neary original art (?).

Conan the Destroyer (1984) – reprints John Buscema adaptation, also a "making of" feature with black and white photos.

Hulk Annual (1984) – reprints Sal Buscema and Marie Severin art.

Return of the Jedi Annual (1984) – reprints Jo Duffy/Ron Frenz pre-Jedi stories.

Spider-Man Annual (1986) – DeFalco/Frenz reprints and original Barry Kitson art.

Zoids Annual (1986) –all original comics/stories. Geoff Senior, Ian Rimmer, etc.

A-Team Annual 1991 – reprints mini-series, some articles.

Marvel Super Heroes Annual 1992 – reprints short US stories, and includes new text stories placing Captain Britain more firmly in the Marvel Universe (and on the cover!).

Marvel Classics Annual 1998 – reprints first appearances of Avengers, Fantastic Four, Hulk, Spider-Man and X-Men. A nice volume.

Incredible Hulk Annual 2004 – reprints Rick Leonardi art.Also, I see that there are new Hulk, Spider-Man, Star Wars and X-Men annuals for 2005. Nothing changes!

Frazetta, Moebius, Eisner, Clement Coll, Crumb

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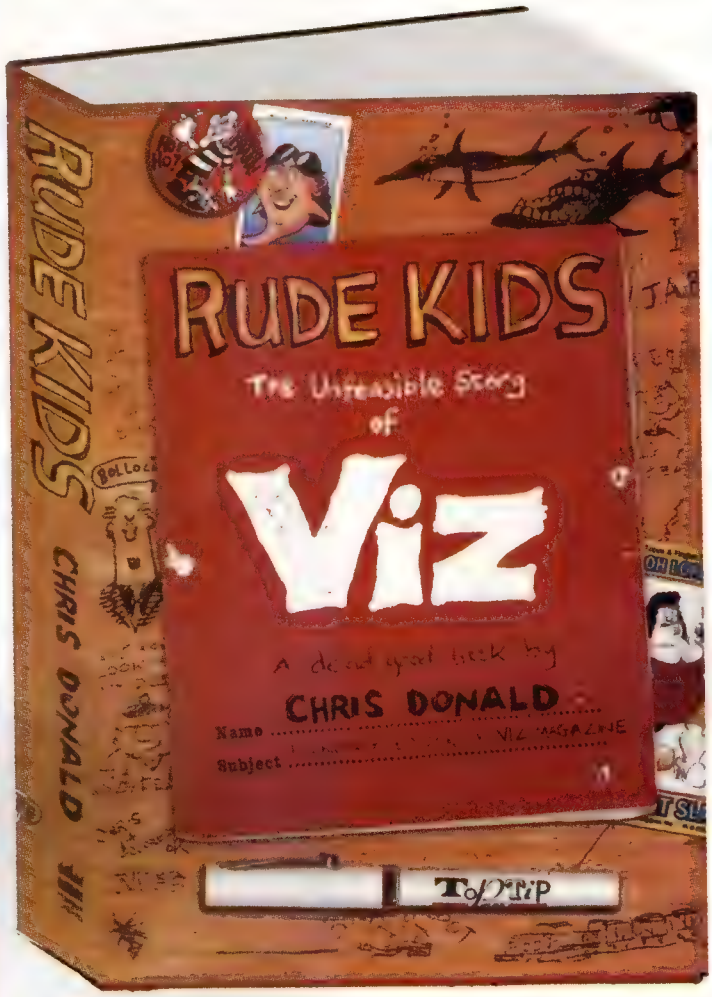
This Viz story isn't at all funny

Founder-editor Chris Donald has written a book about the big circulation days of his adult comic. Former IPC Youth Group MD John Sanders *thinks Donald should have stuck with his day job*



PORN is the easy option in magazine publishing when the publisher is short of a buck. Correspondingly, in youth publishing, in which I was involved for the best part of my career, the option is smut.

A substantial majority of magazine publishers – those who feel that the lives of their readers should be enhanced and not debased – do not publish porn. For youth publishers, the same wisdom prevails over publishing smut.

That's why my eyebrows went up sharply when in 1984 Bob Paynter, managing editor of my humour comics and an editor of great talent, put a copy of **Viz** on my desk. I had never seen it before. It was, Bob said, the work of a team of Geordies and was selling a few thousand copies at infrequent intervals in Newcastle pubs.

It was nothing if not primitive. The sketchy drawings seemed to be hijacked from much that was already on sale in comics, and the stories were propped up entirely by four-letter words – a melange which I believe never changed. But there was some detectable talent behind it, and we were always in the business of finding talent.

I couldn't make an offer for **Viz** in its current state. There was no way IPC would possibly publish smut. But, I wondered, could this team produce something less reliant on pandering to the readers' basic instincts? It seemed worth a try.

I arranged for Chris Donald, founder and editor of **Viz**, together with his merry men, to come to London, all expenses paid. For a suitable fee I would persuade them to make changes that would make the comic acceptable to us. This would effectively require them to spread their talents across a much broader spectrum of editorial ideas.

It would also imperil the comic's "humour" base of pure smut, but perhaps they could be funny in other ways.

Well, in a nutshell, they couldn't. After we agreed terms for a one-off dummy, after they had gone back home and sharpened their pencils, after we had put together the revise with them, it was clear their talents did not go beyond smut, which meant that our version of a "cleaned up" **Viz** looked like rats' vomit.

One point stood out loud and clear – a point I now recognise should have been obvious from the start. After we had taken out the four-letter words, the comic was woefully amateurish. Without its overwhelming "f" props it was worse than first formers' scribble. Try it for yourself if you don't believe me. Blot out all the dirty bits and see what's left.

So, after exchanges of letters and telephone calls, I parted company with the **Viz** team.

A few years after that their comic – their original version, of course – was selling well over a million and had become in circulation terms one of the largest magazines in the UK.

I watched its dizzy rise with interest, for Chris Donald had successfully put up two fingers metaphorically at the code of decency in publishing by keying into the worst aspects of human nature.

And in this age of pap you'll always find a million or so who'll salivate at that sort of thing.

Now he has written a book about it, called **Rude Kids**.

When I first met Donald and his team to talk terms over lunch in the IPC Directors' Dining Room at King's Reach I was intrigued. He had a round, Billy Bunter-esque face with pop eyes and a permanently cautious look, sensing tension. His team simply didn't speak. I didn't know then that he hates people who speak and eat at the same time, so that must have been the reason.

Donald alludes to that lunch in his book, or rather, he tries rather feebly to rubbish it, and all those present. He thinks we ate shepherd's pie, which is something I would never have allowed on the menu because I can't stand the stuff. It was

probably chilli con carne. Possibly he didn't recognise it, or perhaps there is something funny in describing chilli con carne as shepherd's pie.

Don't get the joke? Nor do I. Never mind, there are a lot more you won't get in **Rude Kids** because I defy anyone to tell me what is funny in it and what isn't. For instance, the personal remarks, spattered with four-letter words, which Donald uses to summarise many of his acquaintances, couched in such petulant terms that you have to ask yourself, is this funny, is it boorish, or is it just pathetic?

There are plenty of those four-letter words, but a 371-page book, unlike a 24-page **Viz**, needs more than that to camouflage its inadequacies. For Donald, it is a test of his literary talent, his ability to entertain in decent English. A test which, sadly, he fails.

So what happened to that once self-acclaimed Geordie iconoclast Chris Donald, who had vacuous young men tittering in the aisles, whose comic cashed in on all that is unpleasant in life, and who is now author of a monumentally boring book about Chris Donald, masquerading as a book about **Viz**?

You have to ask yourself, is this funny, is it boorish, or is it just pathetic?

It doesn't take long to figure out. He's gone way up there where the air is thinner. He tells you, for instance, that he is a Class D celebrity. He tells you – not once but three times – that he's a millionaire (this starts on page 2), seemingly unaware that such really is no longer a very exclusive club. He tells you how he was too busy to collect a magazine award and that he once turned down a Royal invitation simply because "an after-dinner conversation with the Prince of Wales didn't much appeal to me."

He reels off the names of the other Class Ds with whom he regularly rubbed shoulders and got excited about. At his Barbados hotel for instance, "Peter Sissons was sitting at a nearby table, which was pretty impressive." When he wins an argument with Martin Chivers about football this gives him "great pleasure."

He refers to "wealthy business men like myself," he tells you he drives a BMW, he even comes up with that cornerstone of *arriviste* trivia – the price he paid for his house.

This is interspersed with weird prejudices: "There's something about people who pull their jacket sleeves up that annoys me," he tells us, along with "I hate people who talk while they're eating." You may not think these are weighty matters but they sure help to fill out the pages.

At a hotel party, "It occurred to us [the **Viz** gang] how funny it would be to kidnap the cake." This they did. "It was all over in seconds and nobody saw a thing. We left the party as discreetly as we could and collected the cake from its temporary hiding place in the hotel garden." This, we are told, is "comic-style mischief".

Jolly ripping comic mischief like this is juxtaposed with photographs of the Donald family and friends: "Me aged 2; me on the left; me in the school photograph; me looking indifferent; a friend gets an award (me on the right); this is me at the Tyneside Free Press, ... note how I've put paper trimmings on my head for comic effect; mom and dad set off on their honeymoon; me getting drunk; Graham caught sipping Champers" – the lot, so that if at the end of it all you're not aware that the Donald family is the UK's first family then your attention span has slipped.

And if there are any doubts left about Donald's elevation to the bourgeoisie, listen to him re-writing the seedy past: "**Viz** may have been ostensibly rude and vulgar but it always displayed a subtle degree of taste and sensibility."

That put me in mind of the story of the woman who went up to the Duke of Wellington at a party and, mistaking him for someone else, inquired, "Farmer Brown, I presume?" To which the grand Duke replied, "Madam, if you believe that, you'll believe anything."

***Rude Kids: The Unfeasible Story of Viz**, by Chris Donald, is published by Harper Collins, priced £20.*

John Sanders, ex-MD of Fleetway Publications, and of IPC Youth Group, and a former main Board member of IPC, was responsible for the launch of 118 new magazine titles – most of them for under 18s – between 1969 and 1989. His published work includes short stories, poetry and 17 books.

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SUNDAYS: DECEMBER 5th, JANUARY 23rd
GLADSTONE HOTEL, LORD NELSON STREET, LIVERPOOL

MANCHESTER
SATURDAYS: DECEMBER 4th, JANUARY 22nd
SACHAS HOTEL, TIB STREET, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER

NEWCASTLE
SATURDAYS: NOVEMBER 27th, JANUARY 15th
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, STUDENTS' UNION BALLROOM, SANDYFORD ROAD, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

NOTTINGHAM
SATURDAYS: DECEMBER 18th, FEBRUARY 19th
VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM

SHEFFIELD
SATURDAY: JANUARY 8th
THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND, MAIN HALL, MAPPIN STREET (off West Street), SHEFFIELD

DEALERS: WRITE FOR INFORMATION PACK

SEND SAE FOR FULL DETAILS:- GOLDEN ORBIT, 18 OAK TREE WAY, STRENSALL, YORK Y032 5TF
E-MAIL: information@goldenorbit.co.uk

OPENS MIDDAY

Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for July 2004

Superman/Batman up to #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(3)	**Superman/Batman #11** $2.95 (143,712)	DC Comics
2	(=)	**Superman #207** $2.50 (138,984)	DC Comics
3	(1)	**Identity Crisis #2** $3.95 (129,852)	DC Comics
4	(3)	**Astonishing X-Men #3** $2.99 (129,362)	Marvel
5	(24)	**Avengers #500** $3.50 (105,617)	Marvel
6	(5)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #62** $2.25 (98,963)	Marvel
7	(8)	**Uncanny X-Men #446** $2.25 (96,961)	Marvel
8	(12)	**Ultimate X-Men #49** $2.25 (93,572)	Marvel
9	(9)	**X-Men #159** $2.25 (93,164)	Marvel
10	(10)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #9** $2.25 (92,923)	Marvel

Superman still at #2

11	(13)	Amazing Spider-Man #510 $2.25 (84,756)	Marvel
12	(15)	Marvel Knights: Spider-Man #4 $2.99 (75,508)	Marvel
13	(18)	Batman #630 $2.25 (69,026)	DC Comics
14	(19)	Wolverine #17 $2.25 (66,659)	Marvel
15	(22)	Teen Titans #13 $2.50 (65,656)	DC Comics
16	(17)	JLA #101 $2.25 (64,615)	DC Comics
17	(19)	JLA #102 $2.25 (63,249)	DC Comics
18	(21)	Supreme Power #11 $2.99 (63,007)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
19	(22)	Excalibur #3 $2.99 (57,740)	Marvel
20	(N)	Venom vs Carnage #1 $2.99 (56,795)	Marvel
21	(23)	New X-Men #3 $2.99 (56,364)	Marvel
22	(N)	Justice League Elite #1 $2.50 (53,847)	DC Comics
23	(25)	Daredevil #62 $2.99 (50,636)	Marvel
24	(N)	Army of Darkness Ashes 2 Ashes #1 $2.99 (52,004)	Devil's Due
25	(28)	Spectacular Spider-Man #17 $2.25 (51,335)	Marvel
26	(N)	Rogue #1 $2.99 (50,727)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
27	(29)	Fantastic Four #516 $2.25 (48,580)	Marvel
28	(27)	Fantastic Four #515 $2.25 (48,449)	Marvel
29	(26)	Conan #6 $2.99 (45,359)	Dark Horse
30	(31)	Punisher #9 $2.99 (46,682)	Marvel
31	(N)	Invaders #0 $2.99 (46,587)	Marvel
32	(32)	Action Comics #817 $2.50 (45,178)	DC Comics
33	(37)	Incredible Hulk #74 $2.25 (45,383)	Marvel
34	(36)	Marvel Knights 4 #7 $2.99 (43,010)	Marvel
35	(40)	Outsiders #14 $2.50 (41,954)	DC Comics
36	(41)	JSA #63 $2.50 (41,595)	DC Comics
37	(34)	Marvel Knights 4 #8 $2.99 (41,312)	Marvel
38	(38)	Adventures of Superman #630 $2.50 (40,725)	DC Comics
39	(N)	Powers #1 $2.95 (40,287)	Marvel
40	(54)	Captain America #29 $2.99 (40,221)	Marvel
41	(34)	Flash #212 $2.25 (40,056)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
42	(39)	Pulse #4 $2.99 (39,883)	Marvel
43	(44)	JLA: Another Nail #3 $3.95 (37,861)	DC Comics
44	(43)	Robin #128 $2.25 (37,253)	DC Comics
45	(46)	Exiles #49 $2.99 (37,154)	Marvel
46	(52)	Batman: Gotham Knights #55 $2.75 (37,019)	DC Comics
47	(50)	Detective Comics #796 $2.95 (36,500)	DC Comics
48	(35)	Identity Disc #2 $2.99 (36,335)	Marvel
49	(42)	Transformers Generation One Vol 3 #6 $2.95 (36,211)	DreamWave
50	(55)	Thor #82 $2.99 (36,094)	Marvel
51	(62)	Green Lantern #179 $2.25 (35,562)	DC Comics
52	(45)	Powerless #2 $2.99 (34,800)	Marvel
53	(57)	Spawn #136 $2.50 (34,617)	Image
54	(76)	Iron Man #86 $2.99 (34,520)	Marvel
55	(39)	Powers #2 $2.95 (34,361)	Marvel
56	(N)	Loki #1 $3.50 (34,195)	Marvel
57	(59)	Superman: Birthright #12 $2.95 (33,885)	DC Comics
58	(48)	Doom Patrol #2 $2.50 (33,595)	DC Comics
59	(53)	District X #3 $2.99 (33,297)	Marvel
60	(60)	Green Arrow #40 $2.50 (32,635)	DC Comics
61	(58)	Cable/Deadpool #5 $2.99 (32,594)	Marvel
62	(63)	Planetary #20 $2.95 (32,525)	DC Comics
63	(67)	Birds of Prey #69 $2.50 (31,904)	DC Comics
64	(62)	Birds of Prey #70 $2.50 (31,583)	DC Comics
65	(69)	Captain America & The Falcon #5 $2.99 (31,020)	Marvel
66	(56)	Firestorm #3 $2.50 (31,000)	DC Comics
67	(56)	Loki #2 $3.50 (30,986)	Marvel
68	(N)	DC Comics Presents Batman #1 $2.50 (30,758)	DC Comics
69	(73)	Nightwing #95 $2.25 (30,282)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
70	(N)	Transformers Micromasters #1 $2.95 (29,743)	DreamWave
71	(70)	Emma Frost #13 $2.99 (29,446)	Marvel
72	(N)	Official Marvel Universe Avengers 2004 $2.99 (29,291)	Marvel
73	(79)	Wonder Woman #206 $2.25 (29,036)	DC Comics
74	(71)	GI Joe #32 $2.95 (27,907)	Devil's Due
75	(N)	Books of Magic: Life During Wartime #1 $2.50 (27,748)	DC
76	(N)	DC Comics Presents Green Lantern #1 $2.50 (27,130)	DC Comics
77	(N)	Starjammers #1 $2.99 (27,017)	Marvel
78	(N)	DC Comics Presents Mystery in Space #1 $2.50 (26,989)	DC
79	(78)	Alpha Flight #5 $2.99 (26,819)	Marvel
80	(82)	Mystique #17 $2.99 (26,706)	Marvel
81	(69)	Y: The Last Man #24 $2.95 (26,630)	DC Comics
82	(59)	Spider-Man Unlimited #4 $2.99 (26,506)	Marvel
83	(83)	Thanos #12 $2.99 (26,285)	Marvel
84	(72)	Batgirl #54 $2.50 (25,905)	DC Comics
85	(80)	Weapon X #26 $2.99 (25,823)	Marvel
86	(94)	She Hulk #5 $2.99 (25,768)	Marvel
87	(N)	Man Thing #1 $2.99 (25,685)	Marvel
88	(98)	Hawkman #30 $2.50 (25,402)	DC Comics
89	(93)	DC: New Frontier #5 $6.95 (25,333)	DC Comics
90	(N)	DC Comics Presents Hawkman #1 $2.50 (25,312)	DC Comics
91	(N)	Kabuki #1 $2.99 (25,305)	Marvel
92	(82)	Fables #27 $2.50 (25,148)	DC Comics
93	(90)	Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #181 $2.50 (24,960)	DC
94	(91)	Venom #17 $2.99 (24,663)	Marvel
95	(92)	Scratch #2 $2.50 (24,630)	DC Comics
96	(99)	Aquaman #20 $2.50 (24,439)	DC Comics
97	(100)	Legion #35 $2.50 (24,207)	DC Comics
98	(104)	Catwoman #33 $2.50 (24,007)	DC Comics
99	(87)	Legion #36 $2.50 (23,717)	DC Comics
100	(77)	Starjammers #2 $2.99 (23,704)	Marvel

With thanks to Milton Griepp and ICv2.com

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

Siegi Longman

Alex Vara de Rey
Chapter 12 (formerly A.M.J. Comics)
Flat 3, 2 Prospect Place
Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1LE

I'M WRITING with some very sad news for the comics community; Siegi Longman of Phoenix Fantasy, Margate (previously Siegi's Comics,Canterbury) suddenly died following a brief illness, on Friday 29th October.

Anyone who has been at any London comic mart in the last 25 years will have known Siegi. If you're not sure, then he was surely an influence for the look of the Comic Dealer in Mike Kazybrid's *Comic Cuts*.

I had the privilege of being Siegi's friend for over 15 years and remember him as someone who would always do anything he could for anyone in need; doing favours for people even if it left him out of pocket. He would do anything for a friend and truly did have a heart of gold. He helped several dealers when they were making their start in the business, including myself, but also others in Thanet and Canterbury and we owe him our thanks.

From the time I started doing comic marts in 1992, all the way through to the Camden Comic Mart in September this year, if we were both booked to do a mart, then we would have tables next to each other. We would look out for each other, chat and have a laugh.

Siegi told long stories about the things that had happened to him over the years and he had a wicked sense of humour, so they invariably ended in some hilarious punchline or astounding event. If these had happened to someone else they might seem implausible, but all of his stories were true and his interesting luck turned out to be transferable.

For instance, we once went halves in buying a transit van, only to regret our buy when the alternator came loose, knocking out a fuel line, which caused the engine to catch fire and the police had to cordon off the main A road going out of town for a ¼ mile each way, because the fire brigade thought that the van was going to explode. We escaped without injury, but adventures like that happened on a semi-regular basis and I'll miss the excitement.

Siegi's brother Bill and I will both be at the Royal National Hotel comic mart in London on 5th December. If anyone wants to contact me in the interim (Chapter12@ bond007.co.uk) I'll be glad to pass along any messages.

Siegi Longman was a good friend to many and he will be greatly missed.

A sentiment I'm sure many of us will echo. Sadly, we must also report on the death of another great personality of London comic marts, Joan Dobson. Wife to Frank Dobson, the 1965 creator of ***Fantasy Advertiser*** *and surely the father of UK comics fandom, Joan not only inspired (humoured?) her husband's passion but also helped keep all the dealers and fans happy, supplying food and drink from her tables on the Camden Centre stage.*

Our heart-felt condolences go to Frank, his two sons, his daughter and grandchildren.

A great event!

Lew Stringer via e-mail

JUST a quick note to say thanks for a great Expo! One of the friendliest events I've attended for a long time and a very pleasant positive atmosphere all weekend. The staff were all extremely helpful and professional too.

I felt like a fanboy again upon meeting Mike Noble, my favourite UK adventure artist since I was six years old. And meeting the cracking Cheryl Burfield the same weekend too! She can take me through the time barrier to adventure any day of the week.

Good choice of venue. Having stayed at two London hotels last month, the Ramada was by far the winner in every respect.

I'll be spreading the word for next May's event.

Thanks for the Expo!

Paul Scott (Solar Wind) via e-mail: paulvonscott@yahoo.co.uk

MANY thanks to Mike Allwood and Dez Skinn for organising the Bristol Expo – I enjoyed it considerably!

There was a good range of talks on over the weekend, definitely something for everyone, from the *Timeslip* panel to Al Davison's talk. There were lots of signings (from Mike Noble to Simon Bisley), traders, independents and stallholders. The Ramada was a good venue, and discounted room rates and late bar helped too!

The ProCon was very informative; Mike Ploog, John Burns and Mike Noble (all great!) talking more about their experiences in the business on stage with Dez was a great thing to see. I think there's room to make this ProCon into a really vital part of the festival (it could even be two days for the May Expo, with more in it).

I was dubious about the idea of a ProCon at first, thinking it may be some sort of back-slapping party, but now I'm convinced it can only be good for comics. I came away with lots more enthusiasm, feeling better informed about comics as a whole.

In future, giving ProCon time over to writers, publishers, distributors, indie comics successes (Paul Grist or the enthusiastic guys behind **Brodie's Law**), comics shop owners (Jared from OK Comics in Leeds has a huge enthusiasm for comics and British indies and has given great talks on this subject), letterers and colourists and so on might be good.

The ideas for workshops were also interesting. If they are to be charged, that's fine, but keeping the price down would be crucial.

I had a great time as a stall-holder at the Expo. Attendance was on the low side (sales were poor for me I'm afraid, but still didn't mar the event). I did speak to some visitors who had been initially confused by seeing nothing in the Commonwealth Hall (people, largely, do these things based on instinct rather than reading the instructions, I'm afraid).

I have to say that I think having two main comics festivals (and let's not forget Dreddcon wasn't that long ago) within two weeks of each other can't have done any of the festivals any good for attendance. Plus I believe there was some comics event on in London the same weekend at Wembley. Still, we live and learn.

Sadly, as Expo was a dummy run for the next Expo in Bristol in May, and Kev F. Sutherland isn't planning to run more festivals, we could have no major winter event next year. I think two major festivals, six months apart, in different cities, run by different people, with a different way of doing things would be much healthier than the situation we've had this year, or even worse, what I fear we'll have next year.

The Expo had a really good atmosphere, and I thought it was a good start for the future. Plenty to ensure fans and people interested in being part of the comics industry came away feeling inspired and satisfied.

I'd urge any comics reader or professional to support this and other events such as Caption (the small press festival held in Oxford), the Comix Thing (London), Moniaive (Dumfries), Dreddcon (Oxford), as well as any ICA and local events. Hardly any cost more than a fiver to get in! It's well worth it!

Next year? See my editorial this very issue.

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

GENTS
OH, JEEZ. NOT AGAIN! WHY DIDN'T I REMEMBER TO REMOVE ..
...AAARRRR!! NOT THE OL' FARMERS! BUGGER!
HI, NED. STILL HAVING TROUBLE GETTING RID OF THAT WOLVERINE GLOVE. N' CLAWS?
!!?

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan ..... www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner ..... www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward ..... www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones ..... www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud ..... www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens ..... www.davestevens.com
William Stout ..... www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot ..... www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith .. www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson ..... www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios ..... www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics ..... www.accomics.com
Acclaim ..... ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar ..... www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press ..... www.antarctic-press.com
AP Comics ..... www.apcomics.com
Archie Comic Publications ... www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics ..... www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books ..... www.boneville.com
Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
com.x ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Pulp Theatre ..... www.pulptheatre.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk

OTAKU.CO.UK
Secure online shopping for the latest anime, manga and game collectables direct from Japan ..... www.otaku.co.uk

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On-line auctions

COMIC BOOK POSTAL AUCTIONS
Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics ..... www.compalcomics.com

Heritage Comics Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com

NEAR MINT
The newest truly online auction system, dedicated to the collectible marketplace ..... www.near-mint.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
'Shop online' for original comic art, lithos, manga, fantasy and gothic art ..... www.thedragonsgallery.co.uk

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net
Avalon Comics ..... www.avaloncomics.co.uk
Big Al's Comics ..... www.bigalscomics.com

CHAOS CITY COMICS
Award-winning site. High grade Silver Age items and Dave Gibbons original art ..... www.chaoscitycomics.com

COLMORE COMICS
Quality Silver Age and Bronze Age on the UK's newest state-of-the-art website! ..... www.colmorecomics.com

COMIC BIZ
"Britain's favourite comicbook company" Over 250,000 items for sale ..... www.comic-biz.com

COMIC CAVE
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Comics & Collectables www.comicsandcollectables.co.uk
Comics Forever ..... www.comicsforever.com

COMIX-SHOP.CO.UK
Hot comics, new imports, fast service, nice prices... Go on, take a peek ..... www.comix-shop.co.uk

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Fantastic range of Golden, Silver and Bronze Age comics on our easy-to-use website ..... www.goldustcomics.com

INCOGNITO
Access over 500,000 comics on the UK's fastest and funkiest comics website ..... www.incognitocomics.co.uk

Krypton Komics ..... www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping ..... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana ..... www.comicana.com

OBSCURE COMICS
For those comics that you can't find anywhere. Cheap too! ..... www.obscurecomics.com

OK Comics ..... www.okcomics.co.uk
Page 45 ..... www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images ..... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online ..... www.silveracre.com

Speeding Bullet ..... www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per six-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 020 7434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0845 166 2532

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

They Walk Among US, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans, Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01727 838719

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Steve's Comics, The Bookstall, Beckenham Junction Station, Rectory Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1HY. Mon-Fri 6-7; Sat 7-5 (back – Marvel, DC – ind, British comics, tpbk) 07977 751442

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

FPI Nottingham, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01159 484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30- 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 01132 469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Sat-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn,

tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

American Graffiti, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Fantasyland Comics, Unit 4, The Colwell Centre, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8NJ. Mon-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch)

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV)023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch)01793 434363

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30- 5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202 394918

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/ horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/ second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Rd). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 0141 4241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat St, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00 Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat B.vd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri unti. 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind. cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403 Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

November 27-28: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk

January 27-30: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. 0033 05 45 97 86 50. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com. www.bdangouleme.com

February 25-27: United States

MEGACON 2005, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

April: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

May 13-15: England

COMIC EXPO 2, British Empire and Commonwealth Exhibition Hall and Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

May 14-15: England

LONDON EXPO, ExCel Convention Centre, Royal Victoria Dock, London. Organisers: London Expo (EW), PO Box 38727, London E10 7YH. 020 8523 1074. E-mail: info@londonexpo.com www.londonexpo.com

May: Spain

THE 22ND BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL. (2003 est: 85,000). Organisers: Ficomic, Palau, 4 Baixos, 08002 Barcelona, Spain. 0034 93 301 23 69. www.ficomic.com Date: TBA

May: Finland

ARCTIC COMICS FESTIVAL, KEMI. Organisers: The Arctic Comics Centre, Rautatienkatu 13 B, FIN-90100 Oulu, Finland. 00358 400 514 540. www.kemi.fi/sarjis Date: TBA

June: Switzerland

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LA BANDE DESSINEE DE SIERRE. Organisers: Festival BD Sierre, CP 200, CH-3960 Sierre, Switzerland. 0041 27 455 90 43 fax: 0041 27 455 91 01. www.bdsierre.ch Date: TBA

July 14-17: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '05, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. 001 619 491 2475. www.comic-con.org

August 5-7: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2005. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. 001 608 226 0200. www.wizarduniverse.com

August: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

August 26-28: Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL COMIC BOOK EXPO 2005, Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. www.hobbystar.com

September 2-5: United States

DRAGON*CON 2005, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. 001 770 909 0115. www.dragoncon.org

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant) (00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels) (00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels) (00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked) (00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles) (00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles) (00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure) (00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga) (00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles) (00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles) (00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles) (00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles) (00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books) tel: (00)1 919 449 0344 fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals) 020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles) 020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums) 020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles) 01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD) 01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels) 0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32 fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics) tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20 fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41 fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums) tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88 fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles) (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums) 0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums) 0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms	cc	= major credit cards accepted
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted		
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through ***Detective Comics*** *#225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and* ***Showcase*** *#4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Colmore Comics & Collectibles, Vienna House, Starley Way, Birmingham B37 7GN (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop. co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Mega-store, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Dennis the Menace, Billy Whiz, William Wilson, Alf Tupper screenprints and etchings available at www. thecomicart website.com. Some of Britain's best known comics characters are now available as beautifully produced and finished screenprints. Authorised by DC Thomson the collection can be viewed at www.thecomicart website.com. The prints are available in limited editions and are a very original way of remembering and collecting some of comic art's favourite characters. For more information please call John Reynolds on 07980 844906.

For sale: 1,000 DC comics from the 1960s to the 1990s. Many first issues, annuals and digests, as well as specials. Many different titles, including **Animal Man**, **Adventure**, **Action**, **Batman**, **Detective**, **Flash**, **Firestorm**, **Green Arrow**, **JLA**, **Legion**, **Superman**, **Superboy**, **Teen Titans**, **World's Finest**. Will split or sell as one lot. For details call 07745 796914 (after 5pm).

Comicbook clearout. Almost 10,000 comics in lots of 10 kilograms (approx 160 comics). From £30 per lot. Over 10 types of lot: Marvel, DC, indies, mixed, Dark Horse, Eclipse, First, Malibu, Valiant, Vertigo, teams, superhero, mutant, Superman, Batman, annuals, plus many others. For full details call 01902 335027 after 4pm or send an sae to 9 Highlands Road, Wolverhampton WV3 8AH.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: **TV21**, **Beezer**, **Topper**, **Buzz** weekly comics from the 1960s and 1970s; **Batman** and **Superboy** annuals from the 1950s and 1960s; any 80 Page Giant comics. Gold Key: **Supercar**, **Fireball XL5**, **Bewitched**, **Green Acres**. Small sized pin-up mags: **Spic**, **Span**, etc. Any Bettie Page material, and Madonna annuals. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted in fine condition: Golden Age Batman pewter statue (1997); **Desperate Dan Book 1979**. Wanted in any condition: **Comics Scene** 55; **Amazing Heroes** 99, 191 (please offer other issues with Batman, Superman or Spirit articles); **The Comics Journal** 46, 53 and 73; **Best of DC Digest** 31, 60, 63, 66 and 71. Details and prices to Michael Connolly, 103 Ballylenaghan Heights, Belfast BT8 6WJ.

Thousands of gaming cards in exchange for your read comics. ***The Crow***, ***Dr Who***, ***Magic The Gathering Revised***, ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*** and ***Star Wars Premier***. Rares, uncommon and common cards at an exchange rate of 30 cards (mixed) per comic. Contact Anthony, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT. Tel: 0151 632 4640

Wanted: **Picture Library** comics, **Pearson Library**, **Battleground**, **Attack**, **Conflict**, **Combat Library**. Call Jim on 020 8330 3788 after 7pm.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

This new compilation of writers and artists is not to be missed! Featuring low-brow artwork, a prose on fear of flying and comics about regret, selfishness, punishment and salesmen of the old west plus lots more! **Cavity** £2.50 (£2 re-orders) contact dzgreene@hotmail.com if it's not in your local shop.

Warren fanzine, **Spooky** 4 out now. Creepy, Eerie and Vampirella. Neal Adams interview! 36 pages, £3.75 including UK shipping from Piers Casimir, 2 The Broadway, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8LN. Piers@spookyfanzine.com.

Oh the horror! MPH Comics presents **Tracks** modern horror anthology. Recommended for mature readers. Issue 1, available now for £2 (plus 30p postage). Bi-monthly, 24 pages, black and white, painted covers containing three different takes on the horror genre and text pages. Visceral, gory zombie horror and heroin addiction in *Cold Turkey*. Psychological horror and videogame obsession in *Parallel Tracks*. Truly terrible puns and spoofs in *Horror Kid*. The conventions of modern horror examined in *Why Horror?* Issue 1 available now, issue 2 in December, from Matt Rogerson, MPH Comics, 152 Ashfield Road, Rochdale, Lancs OL11 1QH. Oh, the horror!

Solar Wind 4 – Oi, you looking at my comic? A merger with The Geezer brings enw streetwise strips and bucketfuls of aggro! 56 A4 pages, colour cover (and free vegetable activated gift) £3 plus 80p postage from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent, Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill, Co. Durham DL17 9AP.

Enjoy encouragement and feedback from others creating their own comics. The Temple APA is open to new members. Write to David Morris (central mailer), 235 Sturminster Road, Stockwood, Bristol BS14 8EW.

The wait's over! **Pest Control** 6 is finally available! Join Airforce, 10, Penny Dreadful and The Link in the conclusion of the *Corridors of Pain* storyline. 28 pages of surreal superhero drama for only £1 from Grant Springford, 2 Cawston Court, Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AF.

Sancho 1 from 20,000 Leagues – A darkly comic tale of elderly paranormal adventurers, ex-exorcists, zombies, demons and possessed naked ladies. US size, colour cover, 32 pages of old skool black and white art and Mexican occult thrills! £3 including shipping from Alan Nolan, 14 Connawood Green, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland or www.20000-leagues.com.

Don your afro wig and buccaneer boots as Black Goliath steps into the spotlight in **Comics Retrospective** 11, alongside fellow '70s stars The Champions and Logan's Run. Plus **Comics Retrospective** 12 looks at Starlord! Both available now, £1.40 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Planet of the Apes fanzine **Simian Scrolls 9 – The Comics Special**! Introduction by Roy Thomas and interviews with John Bolton and Herb Trimpe, and many others. £3 (including p&p) from John Roche, Mediation House, 74 Stockwell Road, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire SA72 6TQ.

Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero! #5½ is a free 12-page comic that preludes the events of **Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero!** #6, which sees the return of the 1980s animal-themed terrorist group PANDA. For your copy send an sae to Graham Pearce, c/o 42 Talbot Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QX. Or visit www.sgtmikebattle.com.

Artist wanted to collaborate with writer on professional comics strip to send to major publishers. Send photocopied art samples to J.A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth BH1 4NR.

Cartoonist/comics artist seeking work/collaboration. Most things considered. Samples available on request. Martin Street, 30 Farmhouse Road, Short Heath, Willenhall WV12 4AU.

Original comicbook art. Always wished you could afford the prices? Now you can. Stunning images of your favourite characters or from your own designs. Example art available on request. Call 07833 111549 for details.

Wanted for non-profit fanzine: pencillers and inkers. I have scripts and character designs waiting for the right candidates. Please forward your six-page samples (panel work as well as pin-ups, please) to Christopher Herbert, 9 Stretton Road, Leicester.

Inker wanted to work on humour strip for submission to US syndicates. Please send samples (copies not originals) to Captain Wonder Cartoons, 31 Dalboyne Pk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 3BU or e-mail captain wondercartoons@hotmail.com.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

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It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

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... A loft which is in need of clearing.

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It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

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Comic & Card Events

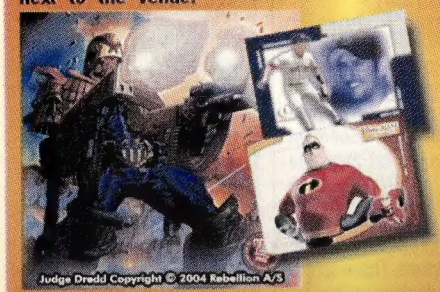
FREE ADMISSION TO ALL SHOWS
DOORS OPEN 12 NOON

THE NATIONAL COLLECTORS MARKETPLACE

2004 SUNDAY DECEMBER 5

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

With over 160 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
A refreshments counter and bar will be open next to the venue.



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COMIC BOOK SUPPLIES
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SPORTS CARDS
SCI FI/FANTASY
STAR TREK
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TRADING CARD SUPPLIES
VIDEOS
YU-GI-OH

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 20TH FEBRUARY, 3RD APRIL, 15TH MAY 2005

BIGGER & BETTER VENUE

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE & CARD MART

2005 SUNDAY JANUARY 16

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

The Comicbook Marketplace is moving to a bigger and better location in 2005, the Royal National Hotel, home of our sister event, the National Collectors Marketplace. There will be at least 120+ tables with over 1,000,000 comicbooks, magazines and trading cards on sale, including S.F., Fantasy, Film and T.V. related items from Britain's top dealers.

120+ DEALERS TABLES!

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING IN 2005
Register on our website for updates

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 747 66 873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

November

27/11 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p48)

28/11 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Toy Fair, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p43)

December

4/12 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p48)

5/12 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p48)

5/12 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

11/12 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p48)

18/12 Dublin: Comic & Toy Convention with special guest, Wynn's Hotel, 35-39 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin ..... (p48)

18/12 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p48)

January 2005

8/1 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p48)

15/1 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p48)

16/1 London: Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

22/1 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p48)

23/1 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p48)

February

5/2 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p48)

12-2 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p48)

19/2 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p48)

April

2/4 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p48)

3/4 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

May

13/5 Bristol: ProCon 2, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol ..... (p59)

13-15/5 Bristol: Comic Expo, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol ..... (p59)

16/5 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON COMICS-RELATED EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD? SEE OUR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL GUIDE ON PAGE 54.

COMIC EXPO
plus ProCon 2
Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol (01179 260 041) 3 minutes from Temple Meads rail station
MAY 13 to 15 2005
headlining the first UK comics convention appearance of
J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI
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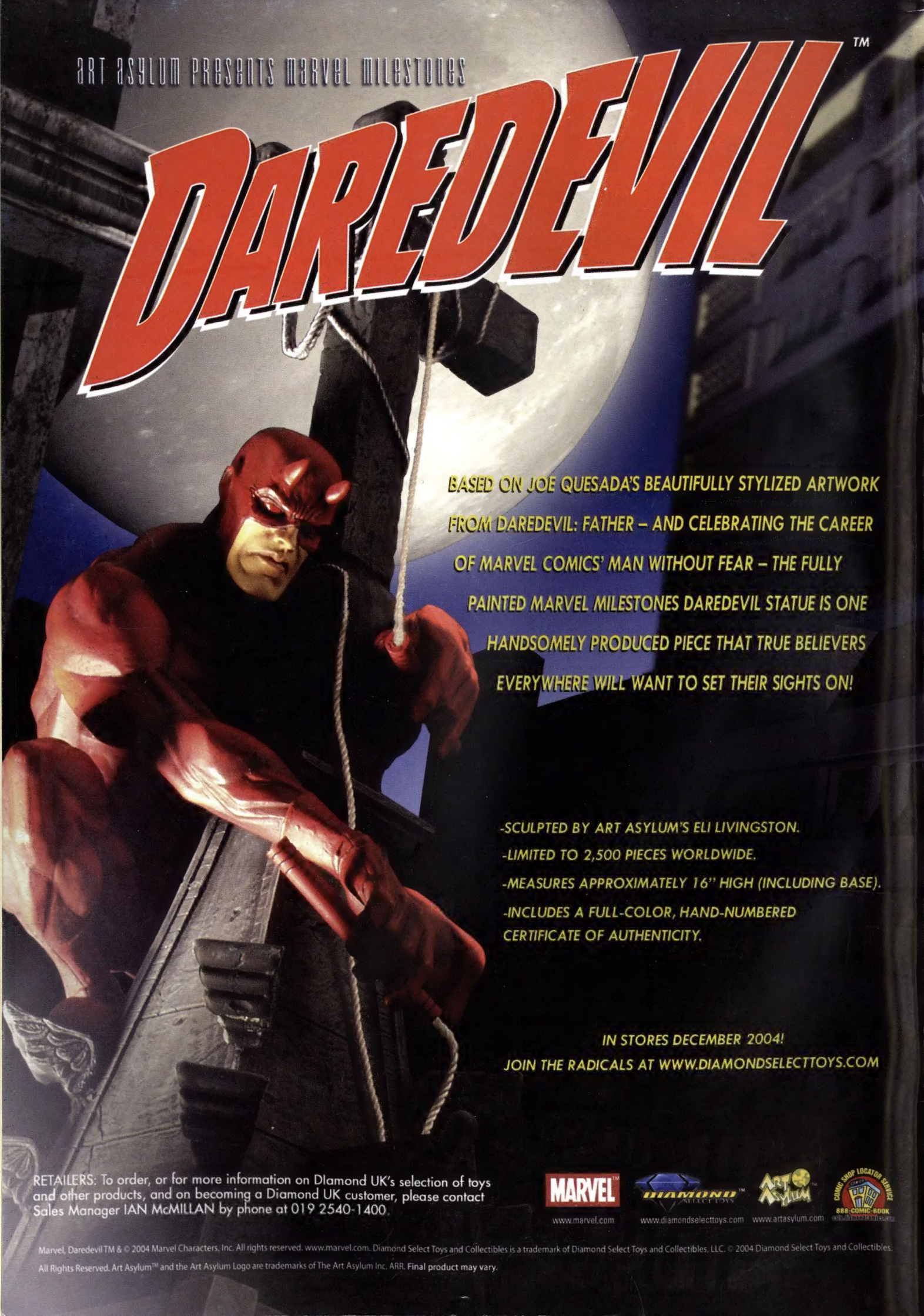
PLUS MACK, OEMING, TRIMPE, PLOOG AND OTHER COLONIALS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